

Baby Blues

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Baby Blues

by [Exdraghunt](#)

Summary

In the ruins of Praxus, the only living thing the Autobots find is a little sparkling named Blue. Jazz immediately becomes attached, and adopts the mechling into his life. He'd never let anything happen to his new charge.

Prowl drags himself out of the ruins with a single-minded goal. He'll do anything to get his sparkling back.

They may need eachother more than they know.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Praxus was in ruins, and Cybertron was in shock. The Decepticons, previously seen as just a fringe rebel group, had been elevated to an extreme threat and the government was struggling to cope. The new Prime, Optimus, had put together a group he was calling “The Autobots” to oppose the Decepticon force. One of their first acts was to try and provide relief to the survivors of Praxus.

If there were any survivors of Praxus, that is. The city had been carpet bombed so thoroughly that much of it had collapsed down into its underlayers. All the searchers were finding were grey frames, many in fragments.

Jazz of Polyhex turned up the gain on his audials in a desperate attempt to hear something, anything over the groan of settling structures and the gush of broken pipes. He was deep in Praxus’ understructure, with the desperate hope that maybe, just maybe someone had been able to survive in the lowest layers.

Things were slightly more intact down here. It was actually possible to tell apart the walls from the floor, and surfaces were mostly walkable. Jazz guessed the place had once been some kind of research lab, judging from the stark walls and scattered remains of equipment. And here, like everywhere else, were grey frames lying half crushed underneath chunks of ceiling or toppled walls.

Then, Jazz heard it. A soft little cry, full of static. He sprinted in the direction of the sound, calling out in the hopes there would be a response.

“Hello?! Is someone there?” Jazz heard a whine in response, coming from a pile of beams which had once held up the ceiling.

As much as Jazz wanted to hurry, caution was needed. He carefully shifted some of the debris, spark falling when he discovered a grey frame with a girder piercing clean through its abdomen. Had he only been hearing things?

The crackle of a blown-out vocalizer came again, and Jazz shifted the corpse to find a smaller frame. A sparkling.

Jazz thought the little one was greyed out as well, until he noticed the red of the sparkling's chevron. Then, big blue optics onlined and the sparkling weakly reached out towards his rescuer.

"Hey, bitty baby." Jazz gently extracted the sparkling from beneath the adult frame, presumably that of his carrier, which had protected him. The dead mech's chest plating was retracted to reveal his fueling pouches, which hung empty and dark. His sparkling had survived by drinking the energon from his offline frame.

The sparkling was relatively undamaged, though one of his little wings hung crooked in a way that must have been incredibly painful. As soon as Jazz cradled him to his chest, the sparkling latched on tightly and hid his face against his rescuer's plating. His quiet whimpers tapered off, and soon he appeared to have slipped into an exhausted recharge.

"That's alright, you can 'charge now." Jazz began the task of climbing back up to the surface of the ruined city without disturbing the sparkling magnetized to his chest, followed by the long walk back to the triage camp that had been set up.

Though he had been able to fuel from his dead creator, the sparkling was still probably pretty low on energy. He'd been down there a long while. Jazz had emergency ration packs in his subspace, but nothing formulated for a sparkling. So instead he located the coding for his auxiliary fueling systems and turned it on, feeling his systems start to filter sparkling-grade energon. He would just fuel his little passenger from his own systems.

As careful as Jazz tried to be, he couldn't avoid jostling the sparkling. There were no roads left in in Praxus, only piles of rubble that had to be clambered over or detoured around. At some point the sparkling onlined again, whimpering in pain from his dislocated wing.

"Shhh, shh, it's alright." Jazz retracted his chest plating, revealing his fuelling pouches. "Would you like some fuel?"

It took a klik for the sparkling to calm down enough to latch on to a nozzle, but when he did, he did with gusto. Jazz felt his spark swell as the little one suckled from his systems. In that moment, he would do anything for him.

At camp, the mood was somber. No one had found anyone, or

anything alive in the wreckage of Praxus. It was a devastating blow to morale.

This did mean that, when Jazz arrived calling for a medic, he was immediately ushered into the medical tent which had been set up under the command of the Autobot's formidable chief medic, Ratchet.

"Primus, you found a sparkling?" The old medic could hardly believe his optics as he ushered Jazz over to a berth.

"Found him curled up under the frame of his carrier." Jazz explained, carefully prying the sparkling from his chestplates so he could be examined. By Primus, the little one's magnets were strong.

As soon as he got the sparkling separated from his plating, the little guy immediately began crying. Or trying to, at least. His voice was still shot, mostly spitting static, and his optical fluid appeared to have run dry, but the way he desperately reached back towards Jazz made it very clear what he wanted.

"Let him cling, I don't want to upset him anymore." Ratchet instructed.

Jazz brought the sparkling back to his chest plating, and immediately he calmed down and nuzzled against his rescuer's spark again. Rooting around for a moment, he found a nozzle and latched on, less for fuel and more for comfort.

"Vocalizer is shorted due to overuse, a dislocated wing, and he's a bit dinged up, but otherwise in decent shape." Ratchet spoke aloud as he ran a scan over the sparkling. "Fuel levels look good, you've been fuelling him?"

"Yeah, turned on my systems." Obviously, considering how his half-full fuelling pouches were hanging out of his plating. "I didn't have any sparkling-grade."

"I do, but he certainly seems to like you. After such trauma, he'd probably rather fuel from a mech than a cube." Ratchet held out a medical sync cable in offer. "I'll need to put him into stasis to do repairs."

Jazz took the cable and gently plugged it into the sparkling's port. Slipping into the little guy's systems with the ease of an experienced

medic, Ratchet powered him down into medical stasis.

Even though Jazz was no longer needed, he felt compelled to stay anyway. The sparkling deserved to have someone there for him when he woke up.

Any number of couples in Iacon probably would have been willing to adopt a Praxian sparkling, the only survivor of the Praxian massacre. But Jazz found himself rather unwilling to give up the mechling he had rescued. The feeling seemed to be mutual, since the sparkling threw a fit any time Jazz was out of his sight.

They had, at least, been able to get a name out of the little one. Or, well, most of a name. When prompted, the mechling had exclaimed “Boo!” Then he tapped Jazz’s visor and emphasized “Boo!” again.

And so, Blue went home with Jazz to his small flat in Iacon.

There wasn’t much at the apartment for a sparkling. Jazz mostly used it as a place to hang with friends or decompress from missions. He did, at least, have a couple of spare bedrooms (one of which was full of instruments, the other with a spare berth for friends or agents who needed a place to crash)

Jazz spent much of the flight back to Iacon ordering sparkling goods over the datanet and having them delivered to a drop address, then calling Mirage to pick up the items, clear them, and set them up in his apartment. A sparkling berth, some toys, blankets, and whatever else Blue would need. Jazz didn’t know that much about sparklings, if he was honest, so he also spent a lot of time researching. Hopefully, Blue wouldn’t mind if he messed up sometimes.

“Here we go, bitty Blue.” Jazz deactivated the various security devices that protected his habsuite and stepped inside. The space was reassuringly familiar, though there were a few changes here and there. Rubber bumpers on the edges of his tables, a high-chair at the kitchen counter, the colorful toy chest just visible through the door to the spare berth-room. Thank Primus for Mirage, he had really gone all out.

Making his way to the couch, Jazz sat down and pinged the vidscreen on. Immediately, he changed the channel away from the continued news coverage of the ruins of Praxus in favor of some kind of bright, cartoony youngling program. Blue stared at the vidscreen, little wings flicking with interest. He had been silently watching the world go by with those big optics ever since Jazz had pulled him from the ruins. Jazz couldn't blame him from being a bit withdrawn, a lot had happened to him over the last few cycles.

Eventually, Blue did seem to relax as the vidshow continued, though he made no move to try and escape Jazz's lap. He didn't tolerate Jazz being out of sight, barely allowed the mech out of plating contact. Hopefully, in time, he would trust that Jazz wouldn't disappear if he couldn't see or touch him.

It didn't surprise Jazz at all that Blue wouldn't recharge alone in the new containment berth. That was alright. He just cradled the sparkling to his chest and powered down, an alert set to wake him if Blue even twitched. He didn't get much recharge that night. But Jazz was used to long cycles on little recharge. He could tolerate a few more.

As the decacycles passed, slowly Blue's personality started to show through. He began to play with the (many, many) toys that Jazz had brought him, and could handle being strapped into his high-chair while Jazz prepared fuel. Blue still preferred nursing over a spill-proof cube, and Jazz was starting to suspect he'd been primarily pouch-fed before, but he was getting the hang of the whole cube-to-mouth thing.

When they went out, Blue was fascinated by all the different shapes, sizes, and colors of the mecha that filled the streets of Iacon. He probably hadn't seen much variety back in Praxus. And every mecha wanted to meet him. Jazz had tried to keep out of the media that a sparkling had been rescued from the ruins of Praxus, but it was hard to hide Blue's Praxian heritage. His frametype was already rare outside their home city-state, now Praxians were near-extinct.

Thankfully, Blue was friendly and didn't mind all the attention. In fact, he seemed to thrive on it, happily greeting every mecha who spoke to him with a litany of beeps and whistles. He didn't want to be held by anyone other than Jazz, (that was okay, Jazz didn't want him held by others either) but otherwise was a very gregarious sparkling. Jazz hoped it was a good sign.

Optimus Prime was, of course, absolutely enamored with the little mech. He dropped by often to discuss the war effort with Jazz, one of his top lieutenants, but it was no secret he was also doing it to visit Blue. The sight of the enormous mech, Prime of all Cybertron, laying on the floor and making truck noises as he pushed a toy convoy across the floor to amuse a sparkling was something that never failed to make Jazz chuckle. It also reassured him that he had given his loyalty to the right leader.

The first time that Blue patted his caretaker's chest and shouted "Jazs!" to get his attention, Jazz felt tears prick at his hidden optics. He'd only had Blue for a little while, but he'd be slagged if he let anything happen to the little mech. Jazz would be the best single creator he could be, and protect his sparkling with everything he had.

Chapter 2

Blue was just getting comfortable enough to toddle along next to Jazz while they walked down the street, holding his caretaker's hand, of course. The going was slow, but Jazz didn't mind. He was just happy Blue was walking on his own instead of insisting on being carried. They were headed to a park near to the apartment, where Jazz was hoping Blue might be enticed to play with some of the other sparklings on the playground.

It had been about a quartex since Jazz had rescued Blue from the ruins of Praxus, and the sparkling had improved immeasurably. He still recharged with his caretaker, but could be set down to play and have Jazz step out of sight without meltdown. And his night terrors were getting less common and severe, only waking him a few nights of the decacycle.

Now, Jazz was hoping that Blue would make some friends. He had encountered other sparklings his age a few times, but didn't seem to know what to make of them. It was like he'd never met another sparkling before. Sometimes, Jazz wondered what Blue's life had been like in Praxus, before the fall.

Suddenly, a feeling of unease swept over Jazz. His plating bristled, and he carefully extended his sensors to more thoroughly scan the area. Maybe he was just being paranoid, but his instincts were what had saved him deep in enemy territory. If he felt like something was wrong, better to be prepared than to dismiss it as a sensor ghost.

Sensing his caretaker's change in demeanor, Blue also grew quiet and still.

"Come on, Blue, maybe we should head back home." Jazz scooped up the sparkling and turned around. They could try out the park another day.

He had taken one step back towards his hab when a mech shot out of a nearby alley. There was no time to think, only react. Jazz dodged the claws that swiped at his helm, jumping back out of reach. His enemy kept coming, and Jazz could only try to stay out of striking range. Though Jazz was extremely skilled in a variety of martial arts, he couldn't exactly fight back with a sparkling in his arms. A sparkling

who was wiggling and crying, appearing to do the best he could to escape his caretaker's arms.

Doing his best to keep his grip on the wiggly sparkling, Jazz continued to jump and duck, looking desperately for an escape route. Claws raked across his arm, drawing energon, and Jazz hissed.

The mech he was facing was filthy, so covered in energon and grime it was impossible to tell what color he was. He also seemed to be damaged somewhere, his movements indicated a talented fighter who was stumbling a little from injury or exhaustion. But he was making up for that damage with sheer fury.

At the very least, the fight had attracted attention. A passerby had stopped, but could not intervene. That was fine, Jazz didn't have the ability to defend another helpless bystander right now. Hopefully the mech had called the Enforcers or other authorities.

"Come on, mech, can't we talk 'bout this?" Jazz tucked Blue against his chest and rolled, coming up on the feral mech's other side.

His opponent made a static-filled cry, apparently unable to speak, and lunged for him.

Jazz ducked low and swept out a leg, knocking the feral mech from his pedes and down onto his back. The mech *screamed*, a horrible noise that cut out suddenly when the mech's vocalizer shorted out.

Sirens in the distance, the Enforcers were coming. The feral mech was getting back to his pedes, swaying unsteadily but ice-white optics full of anger. He lunged again, and Jazz kicked high this time, striking the mech in the side of the helm and knocking him back to the ground.

Then the Enforcers were there, transforming with blasters out to look between Jazz and Blue, and the dirty mech crouched on the street. The feral mech hardly seemed to notice them, optics fixed on Jazz. He leapt, and was slammed to the ground by the Enforcers.

The feral mech snarled and fought, thrashing like a mechanimal as four Enforcers pinned him and locked stasis cuffs around his wrist.

Slowly, Jazz's spark started to slow back down. Blue was still wiggling in his arms, crying and pushing at his caretaker's chest plates.

"Pow! Pow!" The sparkling sobbed.

“Yeah, pow. I had to hit the bad mech.” Jazz agreed with the little one. “It’s alright now, the bad mech is going away.”

A transport arrived, and the feral mech was loaded into the back by the Enforcers. One approached Jazz, plating scuffed and dented from detaining the mech.

“Could I get your information, sir?” The Enforcer asked, pulling out a notebook.

Jazz dutifully rattled off his name and a comm contact, before he was dismissed to head home. As he turned away, he realized he was shaking. He bent his head and kissed Blue’s helm, reassuring himself that his sparkling was still there and that he was safe.

Blue was still crying, whispering, “Pow, pow-“

Rocking him gently, Jazz gratefully arrived at their apartment and dashed inside, making doubly sure to activate all of his security measures before he could finally relax.

Collapsing on the couch, Jazz hugged Blue close. He had been attacked many a time in his life, by professional assassins and mercenaries and thieves, but nothing had unsettled him nearly so much as this. Blue could have been hurt. That disturbed him more than any injury Jazz himself could have received.

Speaking of injuries, the claw marks on his forearm were still weeping energon. He should treat that, but he didn’t want to let go of Blue just yet. His self-repair to stem the bleeding eventually.

Once he had calmed down more, Jazz contacted his agents and had the feral mech removed from Enforcer custody and moved into the more secure cell of Special Ops. This could have been a random attack, but it could also have been a Decepticon attempt to kill Jazz. The feral mech could be an enemy agent. They could take no chances.

The most difficult thing for Jazz to do was leave Blue so that he could go to Autobot headquarters and try to interrogate the mech. He dared not take the sparkling to the creche at headquarters, he wouldn’t feel comfortable having Blue anywhere except in his own secure habsuite.

Blue didn’t like being separated from Jazz, but he did have one sparklingsitter that he did alright with. Smokescreen was a fellow

Praxian, and his familiar frame must have been some comfort to the sparkling. The young agent also had some training as a psychologist, which made him adept at handling a traumatized sparkling with separation anxiety.

Kissing Blue on the helm, Jazz promised the sparkling he would be back soon and headed out.

Deep in the bowels of the Autobot base was Spec Ops territory. A secure place for meetings, and also to interrogate enemy agents. The feral mech had been placed in a cell, hands still cuffed together for safety. He was sitting on the bare berth in the cell until Jazz walked in. Leaping to his pedes, the mech charged the energy field and snarled, seeming to feel no pain even as the barrier sparked and sizzled.

“He really seems to hate you for some reason.” Mirage commented, watching their prisoner with detached interest.

“Well, I don’t think we’re gonna get much out of him.” The horrible static emitting from the mech’s vocalizer meant that the component was probably shot. “Knock him out and get Ratchet in here, see if we can get him fixed up a bit and calmed down some.”

Mirage pressed a button on the remote in his hands, and the mech in the cell spasmed briefly before collapsing to the floor unconscious.

Ratchet arrived a short time later, frowning as he looked over their prisoner. “What have you brought me now?”

“This mech jumped me in the street.” Jazz explained. “Vocalizer is out, and he’s been acting pretty feral. Need to see if you can’t get him repaired a bit and talking.”

“Well, I can certainly try.” The energy field on the cell deactivated, and Ratchet directed in the hover stretcher that he brought with him. Hefting the prisoner onto the stretcher, he started for the Spec Ops medbay.

Though Ratchet tended to work best without agents underfoot, Jazz wanted answers and he wanted them now. Had the mech been after him in particular, or Blue? Or was something else going on? Who was

this mech and who had sent him?

Ratchet moved the mech into a secure room and shifted him over onto a medical berth. The stasis cuffs came off, and the mech was chained to the berth with wrist and ankle cuffs instead. Pulling out a medical scanner, Ratchet plugged into his patient and started a detailed diagnostic.

When he read over the results, Ratchet's optics went wide. "Unicron's ball bearings!" He swore and suddenly spun around, hands working quickly as he pulled out a bag of medical energon and set up a drip. Jazz wisely stayed out of the way as the medic worked, a litany of curses in a variety of languages falling from his lips. Clearly, he'd found something he didn't like.

Then Ratchet got out another piece of equipment, a spark support machine, and forced open the mech's dented chestplates to hook up the leads to his spark chamber.

"He got spark trouble?" Jazz questioned once it seemed like Ratchet was done and calming down slightly.

"You could say that." Ratchet was still grumbling a little, but moving slower now as he read over the rest of the diagnostic results. "He's carrying."

"What?" Jazz looked at the mech in shock. He was gaunt, half-starved, with almost no protoform over his struts. His armor was cracked, even missing in places, and old, dried energon covered his frame. "How?"

"A mech's body can sort of pause a carry if they suddenly lack resources." Ratchet explained. "The sparkling can be sustained for a time in a kind of suspended animation, until things improve and forging can continue. It's not indefinite, though. Too long without sufficient energon and mineral intake, and re-absorption will occur."

"He about at that point?" Jazz questioned.

"Very close." Ratchet sighed and adjusted the energon drip. "I'll get as much nutrients into him as possible, and hopefully it'll kickstart his gestation systems."

"Think his condition has something to do with why he attacked me?" Jazz had never heard of a carrying mech going crazy, but then, he hadn't known many mecha that had carried.

"I don't know. Maybe. Carrying can do weird things to a mech's code." Ratchet looked over his patient with a frown. "And I can tell you something else about your mech. He's a Praxian."

"What?" Jazz looked over the mech with a critical optic. He could sort of see it now that he was looking closer. The mech had a prominent bumper, broad shoulders, and a chevron on his brow with one tip broken off. But- "Where are the wings?"

Ratchet unbuckled one wrist cuff so that he could roll the mech onto his side, revealing a pair of ragged holes in his back. "Looks like one was ripped off, and the other was auto-amputated."

"Primus." Jazz had been researching Praxian frames ever since he'd adopted Blue and knew that they didn't do well without their signature sensor wings. It was impressive that this mech had been able to fight as well as he had.

"He's pretty beaten up." Ratchet gently settled the mech back down onto the berth padding and re-buckled the cuff. "Smashed optic, broken leg strut, lacerated treads. This mech's been through the Pit."

"Do you think he was in Praxus when it was bombed?" Jazz could hardly believe it, but that would explain the extensive damage.

"Or someone had a serious grudge against him." Ratchet fetched a bottle of solvent and a couple of rags, tossing one at Jazz's helm. "Here, if you're going to hover around, make yourself useful and start cleaning some of this filth off."

Jazz snatched the rag out of the air and started the task of scrubbing dried energon and dirt from the mech's frame. Slowly, scuffed and scorched black and white paint was revealed. He'd been burned by some kind of high heat at some point too. Heat like the fires that had burned Praxus after the bombs had finished falling.

"How'd he drag himself all the way from Praxus to Iacon?" Jazz questioned. The two city-states were nearly halfway across the planet from each other.

"I don't know." Ratchet admitted, scrubbing hard at a stubborn streak of energon on the mech's shoulder. "Sheer determination, maybe? Mecha under extreme duress can perform some pretty amazing feats."

As Jazz watched, a serial number appeared from under Ratchet's rapidly blackening rag. The serial number of an Enforcer. Why had a

Praxian Enforcer made his way all the way to Iacon? And the real question, why had he attacked Jazz?

Chapter 3

Unfortunately, Jazz would have to wait a little while for more information on his mysterious attacker. Ratchet wanted to give the mech a few cycles in stasis to let him, and his sparkling, recover from whatever ordeal they'd been through before waking him. And it would apparently take longer to get the proper parts for vocalizer repairs and a new set of wings. Praxian parts were in short supply, and would have to be manufactured.

The serial number also led Jazz nowhere. When Praxus fell, all of their data servers had been destroyed. Public records like Enforcer files were beyond his reach.

There was nothing to do but return home and cuddle his sparkling. And if he was a little overbearing for the next few days, well, Blue welcomed the extra attention. Though Jazz had only been a creator for a quartex, he couldn't imagine what he'd do without his little spark.

Jazz remained on edge for the next decacycle, but no further attacks came. Blue was starting to chafe at being kept inside for so long, so he took the sparkling for some short outings to the store and to the park. Then, finally, he got a call from Ratchet.

In the Spec Ops medical bay, the mech that had attacked him was still laying cuffed to the berth in the secure treatment room. He was significantly cleaner now, though, revealing that he had the standard black and white paintjob of a Praxian Enforcer, and his major injuries had been repaired. Welds criss-crossed his armor, bright silver against his dull paint. Eventually, his chromeonanites would repopulate, but it would probably take awhile. Jazz knew just how long it took for welds to smooth over from experience.

"Well, I'm ready to wake him." Ratchet said, going through preparations to rouse the mech from stasis. "I don't have the parts to repair his vocalizer yet, so he won't be able to speak, and I don't want him to get stressed out. So you've got half a joor, then I'm kicking you back out."

"I'll be gentle, Ratch." Jazz promised, staying out of the way as the medic cabled into his patient and started bringing him online.

The distinctive whine of a boot sequence was heard from deep inside the Praxian, and Jazz shifted his weight from one leg to the other as the moment dragged on.

"This might take awhile." Ratchet warned. "This mech has got a pit of a processor in him. It's probably got some boot lag."

"What do you mean by 'a pit of a processor'?" Jazz asked suspiciously.

"It's like someone's taken a stationary tactical computer, miniaturized it, and stuffed it into a mech." Ratchet sneered, obviously not pleased with the idea. "It's caused some hardware faults, most notably a connection issue with his emotional center. Doesn't help that somebody then went in and mucked around trying to fix the fault. I've ironed out the edits as best I could, but--"

"So he's super smart, with an experimental processor, has issues with emotional regulation, and has a glitch." Jazz summarized. He didn't like the news. A picture was forming in his helm. Maybe the mech was a Decepticon experiment, but the glitches had made them cut him loose. Someone had sparked him and then dumped him to hide the evidence. Maybe he'd been deliberately planted in the ruins of Praxus to kill would-be rescuers. Maybe he'd gone rogue, maybe he'd been programmed to take out Jazz. . . The possibilities were endless. Was he paranoid? Maybe. But paranoia was what had kept him alive so far. "How long's he had the tac unit?"

"Since he was built. He's probably about a couple vorn old." Ratchet drummed his fingers against the rail of the berth as he supervised the Praxian's boot sequence.

"Cold con, then." Jazz wished he could access Praxus's records, but they were beyond him now.

"Ah, here we go." Ratchet leaned in a little closer as his patient's optics came online.

The Praxian's gaze wandered over the featureless ceiling, drifting down to linger on the medical equipment surrounding his berth. He tried to raise a hand, frowning when the movement was stopped by the cuff around his wrist. Then he turned his head to the side and caught sight of Jazz. Clearly, he remembered some of what happened, because his expression darkened and his engine snarled.

“Ah, none of that.” Ratchet stepped into the mech’s line of sight to distract him. “You’re in Iacon, in a secure medical facility. You’re still undergoing repairs, your vocalizer is offline until I can find the parts. Do you know Hand?”

The mech considered it for a moment, before finally nodding. Good, maybe now Jazz could get some answers.

Coming forward, Jazz put out his right hand and rested it against the Praxian’s. Before he could ask any questions, though, the prisoner’s hand was in motion.

Where is my sparkling? Was tapped out with anxious fingers.

That was not what Jazz expected to come out of his prisoner. Did the mech mean that sparkling that he carried, or-?

His fingers were in motion again. *Where is Bluestreak?*

Jazz froze. A Praxian mech, looking for a sparkling. With a name starting with Blue. He didn’t believe in coincidences. “And who are you to Bluestreak?”

I am his carrier. Came the reply.

“Now, I found Blue ‘neath an offline carrier.” Jazz could all too clearly remember the grey frame draped protectively over Blue, pouches out to sustain the sparkling with the last energy he had.

Negative. The negation slashed harshly against Jazz’s palm. *I carried Bluestreak.*

Jazz looked up. “Ratch. You got this mech’s spark signature scanned? Can you compare it to Blue’s?”

“To Blue’s?” Ratchet looked at him with some surprise, before pulling out a medical datapad to run the test. He had Blue’s signature on file from treating the sparkling, and had taken the Praxian’s data while performing repairs.

It took only a klik for the test to run. The datapad let out a little ding to indicate it was done, and Ratchet cycled his optics at the result. “Well then. They’re a match. This mech is either Blue’s carrier, or sire.”

A match. Jazz felt all of his assumptions about this mech fall to his

pedes and shatter. This wasn't an enemy agent, or a Decepticon attacker. This was a creator, who had dragged themselves from the ruins of their city to track down their missing sparkling.

"What-" Jazz cough and reset his vocalizer. "What's your name?"

Prowl. I want to see Bluestreak. He demanded.

"Ratch, did you check him over for bugs, control programs, all that?" Just to be sure, Jazz needed to check that the Decepticons hadn't planted anything on the mech.

"Checked him for everything. He's clean." Ratchet confirmed.

"Alright. Alright." Jazz looked back at the mech cuffed to the berth. The battered, broken mech anxious to see his sparkling. "I'll bring Blue. Bluestreak, to see you. He's at home, I just have to go and grab him."

Prowl bowed his head. *Thank you.*

"I'll be back soon." Jazz nodded to Ratchet and Prowl before dashing out.

It wasn't until Jazz transformed in front of his building and dashed up the stairs that the full implications of everything that had happened hit him. Blue's creator had found him. When Jazz adopted the sparkling, the thought of his actual creators had barely come to mind. They were dead, buried in the ruins of Praxus. Jazz wondered about them at times, when Blue showed some odd habit or behavior, but there was no chance of them showing back up. Except, now, here his carrier was. To take his sparkling back.

Jazz felt his optics burn as he realized that he might lose his sparkling. Prowl had every right to take Blue. To take *Bluestreak* back. He just had to hope that maybe, Prowl would let him visit.

"Hey, Jazz, you're back." Smokescreen smiled as the other mech stepped into his habsuite. "Blue's been great."

"Good, that's good." Jazz looked at his sparkling, who squealed upon seeing him.

"Jasz! Jasz!" Bluestreak cried, holding up his hands in request to be

picked up.

“Hey, bitlet.” Jazz mustered a smile as he hefted the sparkling into his arms. “Got somebody for you to meet.”

“You alright, Jazz?” Smokescreen asked with some concern. Trust the budding psychologist to pick up on Jazz’s upset.

“Yeah, I’m okay. It’s just that-“ Jazz let out a shuddering sigh. “Blue’s carrier showed up.”

“What?” Smokescreen sat up a little further, wings rising in surprise. “His carrier, seriously?”

“Yep. Dragged himself all the way from Praxus to Iacon looking for his bitlet.” Jazz could still hardly believe it. The sheer determination it must have taken, for Prowl to return to Bluestreak.

“That’s amazing!” Smokescreen’s face fell a little when he realized that Jazz wasn’t nearly as excited about this as he was. “You’re not happy though.”

“What if-“ Jazz clutched Bluestreak a little tighter, getting a confused little chirp from the sparkling. “What if he takes Blue back, and doesn’t let me see him anymore?”

Smokescreen stood and came over to lay a hand gently on Jazz’s shoulder. “I’m sure that won’t happen. Any mech can see how much you two love each other. Blue’s carrier can’t be so cruel as to keep you apart.”

Jazz remembered the hate he’d seen in Prowl’s eyes when he’d attacked Jazz on the street, the desperation as he’d struggled under the weight of the Enforcers arresting him. No, he wouldn’t blame the mech at all if he wanted to keep his sparkling far away from Jazz. “I really hope you’re right, Smokey.”

As Jazz made his way down into the depths of Autobot headquarters, towards the medical bay where Prowl waited, he felt like he was marching towards his doom. Bluestreak, sensing his emotional turmoil, was quiet and clung close to his chest plating.

In the secure medical room, Prowl was now sitting in a semi-reclined position, and the cuffs securing him to the berth had been removed.

He looked over when the door opened, optics going wide when he saw who his visitor was.

“Pow!” Bluestreak cried as he spotted the Praxian lying on the medical berth. “Pow!”

The same thing he had shouted during the attack. He hadn’t been crying about the fight, he had recognized his carrier had been calling out to him. No wonder he’d tried to hard to escape his caretaker’s arms.

Speaking of, Bluestreak was wiggling again, trying to get to his carrier.

“Alright, alright.” Jazz gently set the sparkling down in Prowl’s lap.

Any doubts Jazz might have had were eliminated as he watched the pair reunite. Bluestreak squealed loudly and flung himself at Prowl, burying himself underneath the mech’s bumper as though he was trying to combine with the larger mech. Prowl’s expression softened as he hugged the sparkling close, optics shimmering with fluid. A tear slid down his cheek, before he bent down to press his broken chevron to Bluestreak’s stubby one.

Stepping back, Jazz turned to leave. To give the pair some privacy as they reunited. But he’d barely made it to the door when a little voice stopped him.

“Jasz!”

Jazz turned back to see Bluestreak reaching out to him.

“Jasz!” The sparkling called again.

Prowl looked between Bluestreak and Jazz, obviously considering, before he gave Jazz a little nod.

“Alright, baby, alright.” Jazz tugged over a chair and sat himself down at Prowl’s berthside. “I’m right here.”

Satisfied that the two most important mecha to him were still at his side, Bluestreak snuggled happily back into his carrier’s plating and purred.

Chapter 4

There was no sound in the room aside from the soft beep of the medical equipment monitoring Prowl and the happy purring from Bluestreak. So, Jazz talked to fill the silence.

“I found him in the wreckage.” Jazz explained, “Had just about given up hope of finding anyone, but then I heard this little beep and there he was. He latched onto me, and he was just the sweetest thing. Ratchet fixed him up, and I took him home. I tried to figure out his name, and he said ‘Boo’ so I’ve just been calling him Blue. Good to know I was close, at least.” He chuckled a little. “He really likes Captain Action and the Hero Squad, which is. Well, it’s a superhero show. Practically glues himself to the screen when it comes on.”

Prowl was watching him with impassive blue optics, Buestreak still curled into his chassis. One of his hands was gently petting the sparkling’s helm, but his gaze was fixed on Jazz.

“You’ve got a heck of a sparkling.” Jazz said, choking up a little. “He’s- he’s really great.”

A tiny smile quirked the corner of Prowl’s lips, and he nodded.

The door to the treatment room opened and Ratchet stepped inside, taking in the scene. “Alright, I’m sorry Prowl, but you need to rest now.”

The Praxian’s arms tightened around his sparkling, and he shook his head.

“Ah, no sass now.” Ratchet wagged a finger. “You’re still recovering from an ordeal, and you need to recharge. I know you’re concerned about Bluestreak, but you need to consider the sparkling still attached to your spark as well. It’s very weak, and the only way to gain strength is with rest.”

At that, Prowl raised a hand to his spark and looked at the medic as if in question.

“Yes, the newspark is still there.” Ratchet’s voice gentled, though his expression stayed stern. “By a miracle of Primus. I promise to do

everything I can to make sure it becomes a sparkling as strong as the one in your lap. Even if that means putting you into recharge manually.”

Prowl glanced away and gave a brief nod. Finally, his hold on Bluestreak loosened and he lay back against the pillow of the berth in surrender.

“Jazz will take good care of Bluestreak while you recharge.” Ratchet promised. “When you wake back up, he’ll be here for you. Bluestreak couldn’t be in better hands.”

“Alright, Blue. Time to say bye-bye to Ri-ri.” Jazz gently reached forward to scoop the sparkling up. Bluestreak grumbled unhappily, but otherwise didn’t protest.

“Bye-bye.” Bluestreak waved a tiny hand to his carrier. “Bye-bye Pow.”

Prowl raised a hand in sad farewell, optics on his sparkling until Ratchet pressed a button on the monitor plugged into him and dropped the Praxian down into artificial recharge.

“I’ll call you when he wakes back up.” Ratchet said, before shooing Jazz and Bluestreak out.

Bluestreak was rather subdued on the way home, but recovered his usual pep after a few episodes of Captain Action. He played with his toys, insisted on three berth-time stories, and then nursed himself into recharge. As the sparkling’s optics drifted shut, Jazz’s nozzle slipping from his mouth, Jazz couldn’t help but wonder if this would be the last moment he had like this.

It was a little odd, Bluestreak tolerated being separated from his carrier much better than he handled being apart from Jazz. Maybe it had to do with how he’d been practically attached to Jazz for the last quartex he’d been away from Prowl. He was sure the sparkling would get used to his carrier again quickly.

It was over a cycle before Ratchet called them back to the medical

center. Apparently, Prowl really did need to rest. He was just coming out of recharge when Jazz and Bluestreak entered the room. Tired optics immediately fixed on his visitors, and a soft smile came over his face. Jazz was suddenly struck by how handsome the Praxian was, when he wasn't looking stern.

Jazz plopped Bluestreak in Prowl's lap, and the sparkling laughed happily. He grabbed onto one of Prowl's fingers with his stubby little ones and waved his carrier's digit around to peals of giggles.

The sound made Jazz laugh as well, a huge grin spreading across his face. "Seems like you're his fav toy. I got him one of everything at the store, but nothing entertains him more than his carrier's hand."

Prowl huffed a brief, silent laugh and rubbed an affectionate hand over the sparkling's helm.

As much fun as Bluestreak was having, though, he stopped his game when he got hungry and beeped insistently for fuel. Prowl hesitated, and Jazz was quick to guess the problem. As gaunt as the Praxian was, he probably had no reserves at all to fuel his sparkling from.

"It's okay, I got him." Jazz gently picked up the sparkling and opened his chestplates, cradling Bluestreak to his breast. Prowl watched as Jazz fueled his creation, something unreadable in his optics.

"Yeah, I been pouch-fueling him." Jazz tried to guess why the Praxian was upset. "I don't mind it. He doesn't seem to like bottles. I'm sure you'll be back to fuelling him once Ratchet gets you fixed up. I'm guessing he was mostly pouch-fed before?"

Prowl just looked down and away, leaving Jazz faintly confused. Had he said something wrong?

Bluestreak was just finishing up his meal when Ratchet entered the room. He made his usual checks of the monitors tracking Prowl's systems, hemming and hawing over the readings, before turning his attention to the Praxian in the berth.

"You'll probably be happy to know that I got in the parts to repair your vocalizer." Ratchet took a small box out of his subspace and set it on the counter.

Indeed, Prowl perked up at that. It must get old, not being able to speak.

“It’s a pretty quick procedure, but considering the depleted nature of your self-repair systems and the general stress your frame has gone through, I’d like to have you in stasis for it.” Ratchet said. “Which means Jazz and Bluestreak will have to step out for a bit. They can wait and come back in once you wake back up, if you like.”

Prowl hesitated, obviously not wanting to be separated from his sparkling yet again, but the desire to speak again clearly won out and he nodded.

“Alright, I’m going to give you a light sedative and drop you into medical recharge. Jazz, I’ll call you back in when it’s done.”

“Can do, Doc.” Jazz shifted Bluestreak into the crook of his arm so that the sparkling could wave bye-bye to his carrier. Then he headed out, wondering just what he would do for the next joor or two.

Jazz found his pedes taking him on a familiar route, up through the levels of Spec Ops and into the officer’s wing. To the office in the center of the base.

“Hey, OP?” Jazz gave the door a warning knock before letting himself in. “You free?”

“Oh, Jazz.” Optimus Prime looked up at his friend, an array of datapads spread across the desk in front of him. “And you’ve brought my favorite little visitor. Yes, of course. I could use a break from all this datawork anyway.”

“Heh, not easy being the helm of an army.” Jazz sank into the visitor’s chair, adjusting Bluestreak to sit in his lap. The sparkling waved at Prime enthusiastically.

“Op! Op!” Bluestreak clapped his hands together.

“Hello, Blue.” Optimus retracted his battlemask to give the sparkling an indulgent smile. “And what brings you two to see me today?”

“We’re here to see Bluestreak’s carrier.” Jazz bounced the sparkling on his knee. “He’s being treated by Ratchet.”

“His carrier? Bluestreak?” Optimus asked in surprise.

“Oh, guess you don’t know.” Jazz had kept everything concerning the attack pretty tightly under wraps. “Yeah, his carrier showed up. Dragged himself right out of the ruins of Praxus, he’s pretty messed

up. And turns out Blue's full name is Bluestreak."

"That- that's amazing!" Optimus' grin got even wider. "The loss of Praxus has been a big blow to all of Cybertron. That a creator and creation managed to reunite despite the carnage is just incredible. Primus must be smiling on them."

It was pretty incredible when Jazz thought about it. The only two survivors of the destruction of Praxus were creator and creation. And the agony and desperation Prowl must have gone through to get back to Bluestreak, it was almost unbelievable.

"Yeah. And Bluestreak is so happy to have his carrier back. Will probably be a bit before Prowl's really back on his pedes. But when he is, well-" Jazz sighed and hugged Bluestreak to him, getting a confused little squeak from the sparkling. "I just hope he'll let me visit sometimes."

"Oh, Jazz." Optimus' optics softened. "If this Prowl is a good mech, I'm sure he won't keep Bluestreak away from you."

"Yeah, I hope you're right." Jazz sighed before turning the conversation to other things.

The joor passed quickly, and before Jazz knew it, Ratchet was comming him to return to the medical bay. He said goodbye to Optimus and headed back down into the lower levels of the base. All at once, his nerves came back. What would Prowl say, now that he had his voice again?

As Jazz slipped back into the room, Prowl was just being roused from his procedure. As always, the mech's first priority was locating Bluestreak. Once he did, that soft, unguarded smile came over him. Ratchet adjusted the berth so that Prowl could sit up, and the mech spoke. "Bluestreak."

Prowl's voice was quiet, with the rasp of an uncalibrated vocalizer. He frowned and tried again. "Bluestreak."

"That will clear up with use." Ratchet reassured him. "Your systems just have the integrate the news parts."

"Thank you, medic." Prowl said a little louder, voice only skipping a little bit. Then he looked over at Jazz and his creation. "And thank

you, Jazz. For looking after Bluestreak.”

“Oh. Yeah, of course.” Jazz set Bluestreak in his carrier’s lap. “He’s a real sweet sparkling, it’s been a pleasure having him.”

“Yes, he is a wonderful sparkling.” Prowl agreed.

“Hey, uh.” Jazz shifted uneasily. “I’m sorry. For kicking you, and getting you arrested. I-”

“No, it is alright. I understand.” Prowl cut him off. “I attacked you. I normally am not so violent, but I wasn’t quite thinking straight.”

“I’m surprised you could think at all.” Ratchet commented. “Between your injuries and low fuel levels, your systems were operating in basic survival mode. It’s one step above being an Empty.”

“When I awoke in the ruins of Praxus, all I could know was pain.” Prowl said softly. “But then, I could feel that the bond with Bluestreak still existed in my spark. And all I could think of was getting to him. Nothing else mattered.”

“Creators can sometimes do incredible things for their creations. But you messed yourself up pretty badly in the process.” Ratchet sighed. “Your gestation systems have started back up, but it’s going to take a lot of work to get you and the newspark healthy again. And I’ve found a fabricator to build you a new set of wings, but as you can imagine, Praxian parts are hard to come by. It might be a little while before I can get them done and installed.”

“I see.” Prowl bowed his head. “So what comes next?”

“Honestly? I’d like to discharge you to recover at home. But you’re going to be on berthrest for awhile, and-“

“And I have no home.” Prowl finished. “On top of that, I will not be able to care for Bluestreak if I am on berthrest.”

“You can stay with me.” Jazz blurted out.

Prowl looked at him with surprise. “I would not want to impose-“

“It’s fine, really. I got space. I can set up one of my spare berthrooms for you. And Bluestreak already knows me, so you won’t have to stress him out with a new mech.” Jazz started talking faster as he went on. “I can help look after him while you recover, and you can have the

spare room for as long as you need.”

“I see. Then thank you, for your generous offer. I have no creds-“

“Don’t worry about it.” Jazz waved a hand, “You’re a refugee from a destroyed city-state, I’m sure there are programs to help you get back on your pedes. Until then, I don’t mind sharing my hab. Really.”

“Well, if that’s settled.” Ratchet looked between the two. “I’ll see about getting you ready to leave tomorrow. You’ll have some pretty strict rules to stick to, though, until I’m satisfied with your and the newspark’s health. Can I share your care details with Jazz, so he can help you out?”

“Yes, that is fine.” It didn’t sound like Prowl cared one way or the other.

Jazz felt hope flutter in his spark. He’d get to have Bluestreak for a little while longer, in exchange for looking after his new roommate. Good thing he had a spare berth in storage, he’d just have to clean out his practice room for Prowl. Unless the Praxian would rather room with his creation? They’d figure it out.

Chapter 5

Prowl looked terribly fragile as Ratchet assisted him off the medical berth and into a wheelchair. He was still so thin, and shiny silver welds covered his frame. He insisted that he was capable of walking on his own, but Ratchet wouldn't have it. Praxians had difficulty balancing without their wings, and that made Prowl a fall risk. The only walking he wanted the Praxian doing was between a berth and a couch, and even then, he was supposed to ask Jazz for help.

Jazz just stayed out of the way as the two clashed. He suspected that once Prowl had recovered, he'd be a force to be reckoned with. For now, Prowl eventually relented. He seemed willing to do anything for the sake of his creations, even if he chafed at the restrictions.

A transport took them to Jazz's building, Bluestreak riding along in Prowl's lap and Jazz pushed his new roommate into the lift and up to his habsuite.

"Well, this is it." Jazz unlocked the door and pushed it open. "You want couch, or berth?"

"Couch, please." Prowl requested.

Jazz dutifully pushed the wheelchair over to the couch, picking up Bluestreak and setting the sparkling on a couch cushion before assisting Prowl in transferring himself over. The Praxian was terribly light, and sighed softly as he sank back into the soft cushions.

"Here, I got you some blankets." Ratchet had said that Prowl might have difficulty regulating his temperature, and that keeping him warm would help ease the strain on his forge. So Jazz draped a fluffy blanket over Prowl's lap and hoped he wasn't being too fussy.

"Thank you." Prowl smoothed the blanket over his lap, then drummed his fingers against his thigh in the hopes to entice Bluestreak to come closer.

And indeed, the sparkling caught sight of the movement and crawled over, pouncing on Prowl's fingers with a triumphant chirp.

Jazz smiled at the sight and went to the kitchen to grab them all some

fuel. Ratchet had given him a long, detailed list of Prowl's dietary needs, which included instructions to fuel as often as possible.

A cube for himself, a cube for Prowl that was thick with additives, and a bottle for Bluestreak.

"Here ya go." Jazz handed Prowl his fuel and watched as the Praxian knocked it back. "That bad?"

"The taste is not objectionable, I am simply used to fuelling as quickly as possible." Prowl gulped down the rest of the cube. "Enforcers rarely get a chance to sit and savor their fuel."

"Well, maybe we can work on that." Jazz said with a little laugh. "Here, I thought you might like to fuel Bluestreak." He passed over the bottle he'd prepared.

Prowl took the bottle and stared at it, brows furrowed.

"I know Blue doesn't like bottles much, but I'm sure you missed fueling him." Jazz wanted to let the Praxian bond with his creation again.

"I. Have never fuelled him." Prowl admitted softly. "By bottle or pouch. Bluestreak was taken care of by his wet nurses."

"Wet nurses?" An image flashed through Jazz's mind, of a frame with a girder pierced through its middle, protecting a little sparkling. "The mech I found over Bluestreak--"

"Yes, probably one of his caretakers." Prowl looked at Jazz with a drawn expression. "You must think me a terrible creator."

"No, I'm just a little. Confused." Jazz had seen how much the mech loved his creation. "You don't seem like a noble. Why wet nurses?"

"To prevent attachment. I was not intended to raise Bluestreak. They allowed me just enough time with him to stabilize his spark, and no more." Prowl's voice broke a little. "I love him, but I do not know how to care for him."

A chill went through Jazz's spark. "Prowl, who's 'them'?"

"Enforcer Command, and the State of Praxus."

"So what, they didn't like that you created and took your sparkling from you?" Jazz didn't like that at all.

Prowl let out a sad chuckle. “No. They chose a stud and bred me, then removed Bluestreak from me so that he could be raised by experts. He and I were meant to be tools for the good of Praxus, and nothing more.”

“Was- was this a thing in Praxus?” Jazz could hardly believe what he was hearing. A stud, *bred*? “Is this something they used their Enforcers for?”

“No. I am the result of an experiment.” Prowl looked down at the bottle in his hands, running a thumb over the silicone nozzle. Bluestreak watched the movement, wings flicking. “My batch was brought online with highly advanced, experimental processors. They all offlined, sparks burnt out by the demands of the systems. I was the only survivor, but I was left with a glitch. Too much use of my tactical systems, or just the wrong input, and I crash. I was an embarrassment to Enforcer Command, but someone got the idea that perhaps the mutation in my spark that allowed me to survive could be inherited. So I was told that I would be bred, to hopefully produce a success. My sparklings would be honed into the razor edge of Praxus.”

“That- that’s terrible.” To not have control over the decision to create was one thing, but to then have the creation forced on you taken away? Though Jazz would never wish the bombing of a city on anyone, he was suddenly a little glad that Praxus was gone. “Well, he’ll never be taken from you again. I swear. You say you don’t know how to care from Bluestreak, but you can learn. I’ll help.”

Prowl’s gaze met Jazz’s visor, something like hope in his optics. “Thank you.”

“Here, let me show you how to hold him.”

Gently, Jazz showed Prowl how to cradle Bluestreak in his arm, then together they coaxed the sparkling into accepting the bottle. When he finally began to suckle, Prowl’s shoulders slumped and he smiled a little in relief.

“Did you ever think of running away?” Jazz wondered once Bluestreak was settled.

“Often.” Prowl sighed. “But where would I go? Praxus owned my contract. Any other city-state would simply deport me. A contracted mech cannot leave their state without their owner’s permission. I would never be able to find a job, any employer would run my records and see that I was contracted. And getting a ticket to an off-planet

shuttle would be harder still. Customs is very thorough.”

“Yeah.” It sounded like Prowl had thought over this many a time. Jazz was a fair hand at all kinds of datawork forgery, but he was a forged mech with a non-descript frame. He could blend just about anywhere. Praxians were rare outside their city, and cold-constructs were closely regulated. Prowl would never have been able to fly under the radar.

Bluestreak finished his fuel and pulled away from the bottle. He crawled out of Prowl’s arms to look across the room and point at the vidscreen. “Cap! Cap’n Aschion!”

Jazz laughed. “Yeah, bitty. We can watch Captain Action.” He pinged the vidscreen and tuned it to the sparkling’s favorite channel.

Cheering at the sound of the familiar theme tune, Bluestreak settled down in his carrier’s lap and clapped his hands. The innocent happiness of the sparkling made both adult mecha smile.

Night fell, and slowly Bluestreak began to flag. Those big, blue optics became dim, and his head nodded towards his chest.

“I think it’s somebody’s berth-time.” Jazz commented. “Prowl, I hope you don’t mind, but I set up your berth in Bluestreak’s room. He doesn’t recharge on his own well, and I thought you might like to stay with him.”

“Yes, that is fine.” Prowl looked exhausted too, ready to recharge like his creation.

“Alright, let’s get you two to berth.” Jazz took Bluestreak, then held out a hand to help Prowl to his pedes. The wobbly Praxian leaned on his new roommate’s shoulder as they slowly made their way to the second berthroom.

Jazz made sure Prowl was comfortable and set Bluestreak in his arms, before bending down and giving the sparkling a kiss. “Goodnight.”

“Night.” Prowl responded, optics already drifting shut.

Heading back out into the living room, Jazz changed the channel on the vidscreen so he could watch one of his favorite shows. He adjusted the audio output to go directly to his audials, so as not to disturb his recharging housemates.

It was a few joors later when a sound drew Jazz's attention. He muted the audio stream and returned his audials to their normal input. Immediately, the sound of crying became apparent.

Bluestreak sometimes woke up from recharge due to night terrors. Jazz had hoped that being with his carrier might help, but apparently not. Standing, Jazz knocked softly on the door to the berthroom before letting himself in.

Prowl was sitting up in bed, doing his best to soothe Bluestreak. He looked up at Jazz with distress. "I do not know what to do."

"It's alright. He's just scared and needs to know that we're here." Jazz sat down on the edge of the berth and ran a hand over Bluestreak's helm. Softly, he began to sing. An old lullabye, which often worked to calm the sparkling down.

And indeed, slowly, Bluestreak's cries tapered off into little hiccups. Little hands rubbed at his wet optics, and the sparkling curled into his carrier's chest.

"There we go." Jazz smiled. "You're good, little mech. You're safe." Bluestreak would likely be back in recharge shortly. Not needed anymore, Jazz stood and headed for the door.

"Jasz!" Bluestreak called, reaching out a hand for him. "Jasz!"

"Alright, little mech, alright." Jazz returned to sitting on the edge of the berth. "I'm right here, won't leave you."

Prowl sank down back into the copious pillows filling the head of the berth, Bluestreak curled up against his side. "Will you sit there all night?"

"If I need to." Jazz answered easily. It wouldn't be the first time he'd gone without recharge.

"You may lay down, if you wish." Prowl offered. "I do not wish to keep you from your recharge."

"You sure?" Yes, there was enough room for two adults on the berth, but it would be a little tight.

"It is fine. I do not want to upset Bluestreak." Prowl shifted over a little.

“Okay.” Jazz laid himself down on top of the blankets, stretching out on his side. Dimming the glow of his visor, he watched Carrier and Creation settle back into recharge.

Chapter 6

It wasn't any surprise to Jazz when he woke up before Prowl did. The poor mech was absolutely exhausted, and deserved all the recharge he could get. With that in mind, he took the far-too-awake Bluestreak out into the front room to play so he wouldn't disturb his carrier. As he made Colonel Terror march around the living room, complete with a ridiculous imitation of the evil cartoon character's voice, Jazz kept a sharp audial out for any noise from the berthroom. Prowl probably wouldn't want to wake without his creation.

Impressively, Prowl managed to recharge all the way until midday. This despite the fact that Bluestreak had moved on to "keyboard practice", which mostly involved making as much noise as possible with his toy keyboard.

Finally, just as Jazz was getting lunch started, he heard the soft sound of blankets shifting from the other side of the apartment. He put a lid on the noodles he was making and turned the heat down before going to grab Bluestreak from his playpen.

"Come on, lil' bit, let's go say hi to your carrier, hmm?" Jazz picked up the sparkling with an exaggerated 'wooosh' sound, garnering gleeful giggles, before heading for the spare berthroom.

Prowl shifted when the door opened, the light from the hall falling across his face and making him squint.

"Pow!" Bluestreak yelled, waving his arms in his carrier's direction.

Immediately, Prowl's optics shot open and he sat up abruptly. He then swayed and braced both hands on the berth to keep from toppling back down onto the pillows.

"Whoa, there." Jazz came over and sat on the edge of the berth, allowing Bluestreak to give his carrier a hug. "You alright?"

"Yes. Just sat up too fast." Prowl wrapped an arm around Bluestreak, who squealed happily. "Good morning."

"Not really morning anymore." Jazz pointed out with amusement.

A pause as Prowl checked his chronometer. “Primus. I over-charged.”

“Nah, none of that.” Jazz shook his head. “You’re healing from major trauma, *and* you’re forging a new frame. You got the right to recharge as long as you need.”

“I am not used to recharging so long.” Prowl admitted. “I was built to work.”

“Well, right now, that only job you have is getting better and forging that bitlet.” Jazz smiled encouragingly. “Which is plenty of work. Now then, I got lunch cooking. You want to take it here, or out on the couch?”

“Will you and Bluestreak fuel at the counter?” Prowl asked, peeling back the blankets and swinging his legs around.

“I’ve been trying Bluestreak on solid fuel and he tends to make a mess, so probably.” The sparkling was still at the ‘playing with his fuel’ stage, so strapped into a highchair was the best way to try and contain the resulting chaos.

“Then I will sit at the counter.” Prowl said firmly. He gathered up Bluestreak into one arm and pushed himself to his pedes.

“Whoa, there.” Jazz immediately stepped in to support Prowl as the Praxian wobbled. “You’re supposed to stay on either the berth or the couch.”

“I will still be sitting.” Prowl put a steadying hand on Jazz’s shoulder and stepped towards the door.

Jazz sensed there was no winning this argument and dutifully assisted Prowl in walking to the kitchen. The Praxian sat down on a stool, then allowed Bluestreak to be lifted from his arms to be strapped into the highchair.

“I hope you like Polyhexian noodle stir-fry.” Jazz said as he pulled noodles from the pot to sizzle in oil in the pan.

“I’ve never had it.” Prowl watched him cook with keen optics. “I have mostly fuelled on ration cubes since I was built.”

Jazz was seized by the urge to go back in time and throttle some Praxian officials. Instead, he settled for throwing some mica flakes roughly into the pot and adding some slices of cyber-turkey. “Well,

you're gonna fuel well now. I'm not a great cook, but I know how to make a few dishes."

"I was not programmed with cooking skills." Prowl commented, still watching Jazz with interest.

"Well, plenty of time to learn now. I'll teach you, if you're interested." Jazz offered, carefully stirring everything in the pan to keep it from burning.

"I would appreciate that. Thank you."

"Alright, here we go." Jazz served up a heaping helping of stir-fry and set it in front of Prowl. "Let me know if you want more."

"This is quite a lot." Prowl said with a little surprise, picking up a fork and carefully scooping up some of the energon noodles.

"Ratchet gave me quite the list of your dietary needs." Jazz made another plate for himself, then mashed up a bit of noodle and cyber-turkey for Bluestreak. "You're supposed to fuel as much as you can, as often as you can."

"My fuel tank is only so large." Prowl took a bite of the dish and his optics brightened.

"Good?" Jazz sat down and started in on his own serving.

"Yes, very." Prowl took another bite more eagerly. "I have never tasted anything quite like it."

"Well, we're gonna broaden your horizons a bit." Jazz grinned and leaned over to slip a bit of noodle between Bluestreak's lips.

The sparkling was very occupied with gathering up handfuls of his fuel and making fists, forcing the glowing mush to extrude out between his fingers. This process apparently greatly amused Bluestreak, because the action was accompanied by peals of laughter.

Prowl polished off his plate and Jazz immediately served him another. The Praxian finished that one too, apparently to his own surprise. Bluestreak managed to get some fuel into him too, despite his best efforts. Licking energon mash from his fingers wasn't perhaps the most efficient way of fueling, but if it worked, it worked.

"Alright, bitty Blue." Jazz took away the sparkling's plate to be

cleaned later. "You got yourself nice and filthy. Bath time."

"Baf?" Bluestreak repeated, staring up at his caretaker.

"Bath." Jazz agreed.

"No! No baf!" Bluestreak protested.

"Un uh, you ain't going anywhere except a bath." Jazz unbuckled the sparkling from the highchair. "No messy sparklings in the play pen."

"No baf!" Bluestreak reached out to Prowl beseechingly. "Pow pow!"

"I'm sorry, Bluestreak, but Jazz is right." Prowl slowly slipped from his stool. "Do not worry, I will join you."

Jazz immediately went to his side so that the Praxian could put a hand on his shoulder. "You good for baths right now?"

"Yes. As long as the patches on my back are not submerged." Prowl had large temp patches covering the holes where his wings were meant to attach. "They are meant to be changed anyway, and I have a cream to apply to my welds."

"Alright then. Bath time for everybody." Jazz had gotten smeared with energon from holding Bluestreak. "Let's go!"

The apartment's washrack contained a deep tub, large enough for several mecha. Prowl stepped down into it and sat back in one of the niches, then accepted the messy Bluestreak so that Jazz could get the bath going.

"No, no!" Bluestreak cried as solvent began to rush from the tap. He huddled against Prowl's abdominal armor, and the adult Praxian looked up to Jazz for help.

"He's fine." Jazz reassured. "He always gets upset when the bath starts, but give him a few kliks and he enjoys it."

And indeed, when the warm solvent began to cover Bluestreak's pedes, the sparkling's cries tapered off and he ran a hand through the heated liquid instead.

"There we go." Jazz turned the solvent off once it reached Prowl's waist, to keep the liquid out of the wounds in his back, then climbed in with the two. "Here, he's got a bucket of bath toys."

A variety of colorful floating objects were dumped into the tub, and Bluestreak's earlier upset was forgotten in favor of pushing a rubber boat-former under the solvent only to watch it shoot back to the surface.

Prowl took a rag and started wiping the mess from Bluestreak's plating, movements gentle and slow. Jazz made quick work of the energon decorating his arms and chest, then grabbed a sponge and a pack of large temp-patches.

"Can I do your back?" Jazz offered.

"Please, I cannot reach it on my own." Prowl turned slightly to allow for better access.

"Let me know if I hurt you." Jazz carefully picked at the corner of one of the temp patches on the Praxian's back and started to peel it away.

"Ratchet numbed most of the sensors in my back, I cannot feel anything." Prowl reassured him.

With both temp patches off, Jazz was left looking at the gaping holes in Prowl's back. The last remnants of his wings had been removed, leaving only the mounting joints and cabling. All of that was capped off, to prevent debris from getting inside.

"How'd you lose them?" Jazz asked, scrubbing at the adhesive residue from the patches.

"I was in the lowest levels of Enforcer Headquarters when the bombs hit." Prowl recounted. "The upper layers collapsed onto me. One wing was sliced off by the glass of a light fixture. The other was trapped underneath a piece of debris. I ripped it off to get free."

"Primus." Jazz had, before, removed a trapped limb to free himself, and knew what kind of last resort it was. If the rumors about the sensitivity of Praxian wings was true, then it must have been agony. "I'm sorry we never found you. We looked, but—"

"The room I was in was very deep, and buried thoroughly. I am not surprised you did not find me." Prowl cut him off. "It took me over a decacycle to get out. I used up all of my ration packs, and then drained the remaining energon from the bodies of my fellow Enforcers to survive."

Jazz grimaced. It wasn't entirely a surprise, but still, to hear it

recounted so emotionlessly-. Jazz decided to turn the conversation to lighter topics.

“Well, Ratch’ has the best engineers we got on the case. You’ll have a new pair of wings in no time.” Jazz said encouragingly.

“It will be nice. I feel incomplete without them.” The mounts inside his back gave a feeble twitch. “It is as if I am blind and deaf. Besides, I wish to be able to walk on my own again.”

“I’m still impressed that you managed to get all the way here to Iacon, considering your injuries.”

“I drove until my tires shredded. And when that failed, I walked.” Prowl ducked his helm as Bluestreak shot a jet of solvent at his face with one of his toys. “I remember very little, except the burning need to be with Bluestreak again.”

“Well, you have him. And you’ll have this next sparkling, too.” Jazz picked up a tube of nanite gel and carefully smeared it inside the wounds on Prowl’s back. It would ensure that his connection points didn’t start to die back. “Ain’t no one gonna take them ever again.”

“I can hardly believe it but-“ Prowl smiled as he nabbed the squirty toy and turned it on Bluestreak, who laughed. “I am glad.”

“Alright, all done back here.” Jazz applied the new temp patches over Prowl’s wounds, then reached around to pull the drain plug. “I’m gonna dry off Bluestreak and put him out in his playpen, then I’ll come back and give you a hand.”

Bluestreak went straight into a fluffy towel to get the last of the liquid off of him, then was placed in his playpen to continue banging out tunes on his toy keyboard. When Jazz went back into the washrack, it was to find Prowl standing and applying a gel to his welds.

“Hey, no standing on your own.” Jazz admonished.

“I am fine.” Prowl insisted. “See, I am using the wall for support. I will not fall.”

He was, indeed, leaning heavily against the wall of the washrack. It still meant that he had climbed out of the tub on his own.

“Well, you’d better not. Because if you do, Ratchet will kill me.” Jazz took the tube of nanite gel and squatted down to smear it onto the

thick welds criss-crossing Prowl's lower legs.

"He seems like a competent medic." Prowl noted.

"He's the best on Cybertron. And he's got a temper to match if you disobey his orders and do something stupid." Jazz warned. "Okay. Couch or berth now?"

"Couch, please." Prowl requested.

A few klicks later and the Praxian was comfortably reclined on the couch, surrounded by pillows and wrapped in a blanket. Jazz tuned the vidscreen to Bluestreak's favorite channel and looked back over to see that Prowl had slipped back into recharge. Good, he needed it.

Chapter 7

It was an adorable sight. Prowl was nestled in blankets on the couch, hard in recharge. Bluestreak was sprawled across his lap, out like a light. Jazz had dimmed the lights in the living room and turned down the vidscreen so he wouldn't disturb them, then took a few image captures to show to Prowl later.

Whenever Bluestreak went down for a nap, Prowl almost inevitably went with him. And when the sparkling was awake, Prowl played to the best of his ability and tolerated the endless parade of brightly-colored sparkling shows. Jazz kept the both of them well supplied with fuel, and soon enough both Prowl and Bluestreak had gotten used to the routine of bottle-fueling. Prowl always had that little smile on his lips as he rocked his creation in his arms.

On occasion, though, Bluestreak napped and Prowl stayed awake. In those moments, Prowl insisted on watching the news. He stared at the screen, optics narrowed and mouth set in a hard line as the latest battles between Autobot and Decepticon were covered. Jazz didn't really like it, he was pretty sure this violated his instructions to keep Prowl away from stress, but he understood the need to *know*. Prowl never said anything as he watched the news coverage, and always changed the channel when Bluestreak woke back up.

One cycle, a special knock came on the door to Jazz's habsuite. A knock only a few mechanisms knew.

Prowl looked up sharply, and Jazz gave him a reassuring wave. "S'alright, just a friend. You mind if he comes in?"

"It is your habsuite." Prowl said with a shrug.

"Yeah, but I don't want to make you uncomfortable."

"It is fine." Prowl insisted. "I do not mind."

So, Jazz opened the door and let Optimus Prime into the room.

"Hello, Jazz." The Prime greeted warmly. "And, oh, I didn't realize you had a guest over. You must be Bluestreak's carrier."

Upon seeing who the visitor was, Prowl sat up straight and his optics went wide. "Yes sir, I am."

"No need for that." Optimus smiled and waved a hand. "Just Optimus is fine."

"Yes, sir." Prowl responded stiffly, in a tone of voice that said he'd do no such thing.

"OP, this is Prowl. He's staying with me for a while until he can get back on his pedes." Jazz went over to Bluestreak's playpen, where the sparkling was hopping up and down and squealing. "Alright, I think somebody wants to say hello."

When Bluestreak was set on the ground, he ran over to the Prime as quickly as his wobbly little legs would take him. "Op! Op!" He wrapped both arms around Optimus' shinguard.

"Hello, Blue." Optimus very carefully knelt down to pat the sparkling's helm. "Why don't you show me what Captain Action and Colonel Terror are up to today."

The sparkling toddled over to his toys, Optimus dutifully following behind. Soon, the two were happily ensconced in a game of pretend.

Prowl was still staring, seemingly in shock at the sight of the massive convoy playing with his sparkling. Jazz sat next to the adult Praxian on the couch and gave him a nudge.

"You alright, mech?" He asked softly.

"Are you sure that's the Prime?" Prowl didn't take his optics off the pair.

Jazz chuckled. "Pretty sure, yeah. He and Bluestreak are good friends."

"He takes the time to play with a sparkling when there's a war on?" Prowl sounded vaguely disapproving.

"He comes to unwind when things get hard. A mech can't be on guard all the time." Jazz watched the two play with a smile. "I've known OP for a long time. Since before the whole Prime thing. He comes to visit and chat. But mostly, I think he's here to see Bluestreak."

"Hmm." Prowl relaxed slightly, sinking back into his piles of blankets.

Once Bluestreak had tuckered himself out, Optimus gently set the tired sparkling into his carrier's arms and took a seat in the armchair across from the couch.

"Thank you." Prowl wrapped his arms around his sparkling.

"I do not wish for you to think I was ignoring you, but I think Blue would've been quite upset if I didn't pay attention to him first." Optimus said with a quiet laugh.

"It is alright." Prowl responded. "I know that he is hard to resist."

"Indeed. And how have you been doing?" Optimus inquired. "I understand you were injured quite badly."

"I am. Recovering. Once I have a new set of wings, I am sure I will be able to walk again." Prowl was clearly looking forward to that.

"Wonderful. Please, if you require anything at all, don't hesitate to ask." Optimus offered.

"Actually, I wanted to inquire about a position in the tactical department of the Autobots."

Optimus cycled his optics in surprise. "You wish to enlist?"

"I was designed for large-scale predictive calculations and real-time battle strategy." Prowl stated. "I believe I would be of great use to you."

"I agree. But your first focus should be your health, and your sparkling." Optimus pointed out.

"Plus, you're carrying. It'll be a bit before you're ready to work." Jazz butted in.

"Oh, are you carrying? Congratulations." Optimus said earnestly. "Then I agree, you definitely should focus on yourself and your creations first. Once you are ready, I am sure the Autobots will have a place for you."

Prowl frowned, but didn't press the point any further. Conversation turned to other things, and eventually, Optimus bid them farewell. Curling up again in his blanket nest, Prowl sat silently contemplative.

Under Jazz's care, with plenty fuel and rest, Prowl began to recover. His welds re-colored, his paint started to shine, and he was starting to put on weight. No longer were his cheeks hollow and protoform sunken. When he sat, his belly curved outward just a little, a good sign that his gestation systems had reactivated.

Ratchet was apparently satisfied with Prowl's improvement at his next appointment. Instead of meeting in the secure bowels of the Autobot Base, they instead saw the medic at the community clinic he volunteered at. The equipment was a little worn, and the treatment room had colorful cartoons of various Cybertronian fauna dancing across the walls, but there was no need to keep Prowl in a secure medbay.

"Well, you're certainly looking better." Ratchet commented as he assisted Prowl up onto the exam berth. Jazz took a seat in the visitor's chair, Bluestreak in his lap. "How have you been feeling?"

"Tired." Prowl shifted his legs up onto the berth and leaned back. "It seems like I do nothing but fuel and recharge."

"Good." Ratchet nodded in approval. "Your repair systems work best during recharge. Resting and fuelling are the best things you can do right now. Now, let's check up on you and the sparkling."

Prowl sat stiffly as a scanner was run over his frame, then he opened up his chest plating for a visual examination. Optics fixed on the ceiling, Prowl showed no sign of emotion as Ratchet hmm'd at whatever he was seeing.

Finally, Ratchet straightened and told Prowl he could close up. "Well, your newspark looks much stronger. Still a little weak, but I think it has a good chance of making it."

"It is. . . okay?" Prowl asked softly, a hand resting over his chest plating.

"Yes. Here, I took an image capture." Ratchet held out his scanner so that Prowl could see the display screen. "See, there's your newspark right there."

Cleanser fluid gathered at the corners of Prowl's optics and slid down his cheeks as he looked at the image. "I. Assumed it had been re-absorbed. That my frame would no longer be able to support it."

"Our frames can do surprising things." Ratchet put a comforting hand on Prowl's shoulder. "And look, see the little ring around the newspark? We call that the sign of Solus. You're likely having a femme."

"A femme." Prowl's shoulders shook, and the tears came faster. "When I awoke in the ruins, I could no longer feel it, her, in my spark. I assumed she had extinguished. That I had failed her."

"You haven't failed her." Ratchet said gently. "She's right there, right next to your spark. She may have gone a little dormant due to the stress on your spark, but I am sure she'll make herself known again soon enough."

Ratchet printed out the image and handed it to Prowl.

"You can probably expect descension to occur in two decacycles or so. Let's check and see how the frame development is proceeding."

Holding the img-cap tightly, Prowl put his arms to his sides to allow the medic better access.

Ratchet pressed a scanner wand to Prowl's abdomen and looking at the fuzzy shapes displayed on the holo. "Well, there's the spark chamber. It looks like things are lagging behind a little here, though. I'll have to see about increasing your supplement intake."

"The frame growth is insufficient?" Prowl asked with some concern.

"At this stage, the basic struts should be completed. But, considering your condition a few decacycles ago, I think this is good progress." Ratchet reassured him. "The sparkling may end up being a little small and underdeveloped at emergence, but with care, she'll have a good chance. I'll have an incubator ready just in case."

"Would transfluid contributions help?" Prowl inquired. "When I carried Bluestreak, the stud assigned to me made regularly scheduled visits for donations."

Ratchet narrowed his optics, "What do you mean by 'stud'?"

So, Prowl recounted what had happened to him in Praxus. The order

from Enforcer Command that he be bred, the visits from his assigned 'stud' every dark-cycle, the scientists who came to take Bluestreak just after he emerged, not even allowing Prowl a chance to hold him. How Prowl had only been allowed brief windows of time with his sparkling, always closely supervised. Jazz wasn't surprised to see Ratchet clenching his fists, field simmering in anger, by the time the explanation was finished.

"That's not going to happen here." Ratchet growled, "We don't take sparklings from their carriers. Primus, if Praxus wasn't a smoking crater I'd march in there myself and introduce whoever ran the Enforcers to my wrench."

That got a little half smile out of Prowl. "I'm sure you would have had the Captain quaking in his pedes."

"Well. Though transfluid would help, since it's already been refined into a form your systems can use, your newspark won't extinguish without it." Ratchet said firmly. "With proper mineral intake and plenty of rest, her development will continue to progress. You should not feel pressured to interface with someone just for your sparkling's health."

"I see." Prowl looked aside thoughtfully. "Thank you, medic."

"Now then, I'll see you back here in one orn. I should have your new wings ready by then. Until then-" Both Prowl's and Jazz's inboxes pinged with an updated dietary and aftercare sheet for Prowl. "Rest and relax. Comm me if anything feels wrong."

Jazz would see to it that Prowl did nothing else.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Prowl still insisted on sitting at the counter for meals. Jazz sensed it was a battle he wouldn't win, so he just dutifully assisted his housemate in getting to and from the kitchen. And when Prowl finished his plate, Jazz always had more ready to go.

"More?" Jazz offered when he saw Prowl scraping the last of the iron casserole from his plate.

"I've already had two servings." Prowl hesitated.

"And if you want more, you want more." Jazz scooped the rest of the pot onto his plate.

"I feel as though I am eating my way through your cred account." Prowl frowned down at the fuel in front of him.

"I'm not hurting for shanix. Don't worry about it." Jazz insisted. "Besides, you and the bitlet need it."

Prowl raised a hand to his chest, a gesture he'd been doing more of lately. Jazz wondered if he was feeling the sparkling again, but didn't want to pry. Finally, he raised his fork and finished his dinner.

Bluestreak had managed to remain reasonably clean, and only needed a wipedown before he could snuggle on the couch. Prowl settled in his usual nest of blankets, with Jazz sprawling out next to him. After a moment's indecision of which adult to cuddle with, Bluestreak settled between the two and pointed at the vidscreen insistently.

"So demanding." Jazz said with a laugh, pinging the vidscreen on.

And so, they settled into their usual routine, of watching brightly colored sparkling-shows until Bluestreak fell into recharge. Prowl kept up a running commentary, pointing out various illogical plot points and impossible physics. Jazz had, at first, pointed out that these were sparkling shows and not meant to be realistic, before realizing this was just how Prowl enjoyed media. So instead, he joined in, laughing

at the silly antics of characters as Prowl griped about out-of-character episodes and continuity errors.

It was amazing how quickly Jazz had gotten used to his new housemate. There was something comforting and domestic about sitting there on the couch, Bluestreak between them, critiquing sparkling media. Every once in a while, Bluestreak would get fed up at the running commentary and turn around to admonish them with a loud “Shhhhh!”, making both adults laugh.

Jazz’s younglinghood had hardly been conventional. He’d crawled out of the hotspot in Stanix and immediately been picked up by a local crime syndicate, who used him as a runner around Polyhex. And later as a spy and sneak, getting dirt on their enemies and Enforcers alike. In those cycles, never would he have been able to imagine that things would turn out like this.

He still had a job to do, of course. Even on creator leave, Jazz still kept abreast of his agents’ activities and the intelligence flowing through the Spec Ops department. And, some day, he would have to go back to spying and murdering. But for now, he could sit back and let the rumbling purr of Prowl’s engine become a comforting background noise. The lighter purr of Bluestreak’s systems vibrated against his thigh, as Jazz reached down to pet the sparkling’s wings.

The night drew on, and slowly Bluestreak began to nod off. Until he was curled up, sound in recharge between his two favorite adults.

“Think that means we should head to berth too?” Jazz asked with some amusement.

“Actually.” Prowl reached out to place a hand on Jazz’s arm. “I have something I’d like to ask you.”

Jazz tilted his helm and shifted to face Prowl fully. “What’s up?”

“Would you be willing to donate transfluid for my newspark?”

Abruptly, all of Jazz’s thoughts screeched to a halt and he just stared at the Praxian. “Uh-. You mean, like, interface?”

“I believe that is how such donations are typically made, yes.” Prowl replied drily.

“W- I-. You want me to interface with you?” Jazz asked incredulously.

“Is the idea so objectionable?”

The kicker is that it wasn’t, Jazz realized abruptly. Prowl was handsome, smart, and good company. But Jazz had a feeling that Prowl wasn’t doing this out of desire. “Are you asking me because you want to ‘face, or because you think it’s necessary?”

“Regular transfluid donations are highly recommended for proper newspark development.” Prowl recounted clinically. “As it is in a refined form that the forge can easily use.”

“Yeah, and you heard Ratch’. He said the newspark won’t extinguish without it. You just have to keep eating right.” Jazz had been doing his very best to include every one of the minerals on Ratchet’s list in Prowl’s meals.

“I also heard him say that she might emerge underdeveloped and need to spend time in an incubator.” It was clear this idea was upsetting to Prowl. “I want her to emerge healthy and strong. She should not suffer because I am inadequate.”

“Inadequate? Prowl!” Jazz reached forward to take his hands. “You are an incredible creator, and every cycle I can see how hard you’re trying for your creations.”

Prowl glanced down at their hands, lips pressed into a thin line. “I also have no way of repaying you for your generosity. You should get some sort of pleasure from my presence.”

Jazz actually physically recoiled at that statement, getting a drowsy, confused chirp out of Bluestreak as his pillow shifted.

“Prowl!” Jazz whisper-shouted, trying not to wake the sparkling. “You don’t have to pay me back for helping you. Especially not by offering your frame. I do not, and never will, expect that from you.”

“Then what do you expect from me?” Prowl questioned.

“For you to recover and get healthy?” Jazz hesitated. “Actually, there is another reason I offered to let you stay with me.”

Prowl raised an optic ridge, waiting for him to continue.

“I know I haven’t had Bluestreak for long, but he’s become so

important to me. I was afraid that you would take him away from me. If you stayed here, then I'd get to have him a little longer." Jazz admitted.

"You thought I would remove him from your care?" Prowl's expression softened.

"Won't you?" Jazz questioned. "Once you're able to live on your own again and take care of your creations?"

"You are an exemplary caretaker. Better than I." Prowl sighed and glanced away. "I have been. Wondering if perhaps Bluestreak and the newspark would be better off with you."

"I won't take them from you. You obviously love them." Jazz let out a soft chuckle. "I think we really got to work on talking to each other. It'll keep the two of us from worrying."

"You are right." Prowl agreed. Then he brought them back around to the original topic of conversation. "So, will you interface with me?"

Right. Jazz wasn't sure what to do. What was the right answer? "Can you give me a bit to think on it? Drop the topic for now, I'll try to have an answer for you tomorrow night."

"Alright."

"Now come on, berthtime." Jazz picked up the snoozing Bluestreak and stood, then held out a hand to Prowl. "I think I'm gonna sleep in my own berth tonight, but if Blue gets upset, I'll hear and come in."

The two Praxians curled up together on the berth in the spare room, and Jazz went into his own berthroom. It would be the first time he'd recharged in his own berth since Prowl had moved in. Though he didn't hear a peep from Bluestreak all night, Jazz still found it hard to fall into recharge.

The problem, Jazz was beginning to realize, wasn't that he wasn't attracted to Prowl. The problem is that he *was*. His spark always gave a little thrill when Prowl's stern expression softened, and getting the quiet mech to actually laugh felt like a victory. But he also had a dry sense of humor, which Jazz got glimpses of when he razzed the vidshows they watched.

As he healed, Prowl was also turning into quite the looker. His black and white paint was plain, but as the gloss came back it highlighted the curves of his chassis. The ruby red chevron on his brow practically called out to be nibbled on. Jazz could only imagine what he'd look like when he had wings again, and had regained his lost weight.

But some thoughts kept whirling in Jazz's head. Had Prowl ever experienced consensual interface? Did he even understand what consent was? Was he just forcing himself into this over fear for his newspark, or did he actually want Jazz?

As promised, Prowl did not bring up the topic again all next cycle. He snacked, dozed on the couch, and caught some of the news. Jazz, meanwhile, stewed in his own indecision. He felt no closer to an answer as the joor of reckoning approached.

Finally, Bluestreak had drifted off into recharge and Prowl turned off the vidscreen.

"So-" Jazz started.

"So." Prowl agreed, obviously waiting for a response.

"I got a few things to say, so. Just let me ramble til I'm done, alright?" Jazz gathered together his thoughts. "I've interfaced a lot of ways in my life. By choice, and not. Now, interface is something I share with my friends, and people I care about."

Prowl had a good poker face, but Jazz could see the way his frown deepened as his hands twined in his lap.

"Now, don't think that means I don't care about you. I do. And, I'd like to consider you a friend. But you gotta know, if we do this. I won't separate this from my feelings. Interface isn't just a- a transaction, it's a collaborative experience, ya dig? It's sharing pleasure, not one mech taking it."

"I have. Never had a friend." Prowl said softly. "I do not believe anyone has ever cared about me."

Primus. Though Jazz had suspected it to be true, he still felt his spark break a little.

"Prowl, can I hug you?"

Prowl seemed startled by the question. "Why?"

“Because you seem upset, and I am upset, and sometimes hugs help.” Jazz explained. “I’m guessing nobody’s ever hugged you before?”

“No.” Prowl almost whispered. “But, you may.”

Jazz leaned forward and wrapped his arms around the Praxian, careful to avoid the temp patches on his back. Prowl was stiff at first, but slowly, he relaxed into it. Then, his arms came up and he hugged Jazz back.

They sat like that for several long kliks, just holding each other. Then, Prowl spoke, voice muffled by Jazz’s collar. “So, will you do it?”

“That depends, can you be honest with me?” Jazz asked. “Do you want this just because you’re afraid for your newspark, or do you actually want to interface?”

“I. Do not know.” Prowl admitted.

Well. Jazz supposed that was progress. “Okay. Well, I am willing to try if you are. But you have to tell me if I do anything you don’t like.”

“Alright.”

Jazz placed Bluestreak in his containment berth, where hopefully he’d be able to charge forwhile without waking, then he helped Prowl into his own berthroom.

“Is there anything you enjoy in an interface? Something that feels good?” Jazz inquired as he sat down beside Prowl, reaching out a hand to gently rub the other mech’s shoulder.

“I do not know.” Prowl shook his head. “In all of my previous experiences, I was given an aphrodisiac to ensure that I overloaded. It interfered with my memory recall.”

Primus. Everything Jazz learned about Prowl’s past just got worse and worse. He almost lost his nerve then and there. With a deep vent, Jazz placed himself between Prowl’s legs. “Then we’ll have to discover that together. If I do anything, I mean anything, you don’t like, say something.”

“I will. But-“ Prowl spread his legs a little wider and lay back. “I do not believe you will do anything to harm me.”

Jazz sure hoped he was right.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter: this fic finally earns its E rating

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

They bang: the chapter

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

“Alright, Prowl, how about you open up for me?” Jazz placed his hands on Prowl’s thighs and rubbed his thumbs encouragingly over the warm protoform. Still too thin, he could feel the hard strut underneath, but they would work on that. A carrier was meant to be plump and round, with plenty of extra cushioning for the newspark. It would take a lot of effort, but Jazz was determined to see Prowl reach that goal.

The click of Prowl’s modesty plating opening seemed loud in the silent berthroom. Jazz was disappointed, but not entirely surprised, to find that the Praxian’s valve was closed and cold. Prowl had never known consensual interface, had never overloaded without chemical help, he was probably just nervous. So was Jazz, but he, at least, had plenty of experience in this field. He knew how to warm up another mech. He would treat this as though it was Prowl’s first time.

Leaning in, Jazz exhaled a hot vent over Prowl’s valve. The Praxian shivered in response, the legs on either side of Jazz’s helm shifting. An encouraging sign, hopefully. Jazz pressed his thumbs into the join between Prowl’s legs and pelvic girdle, where bundles of sensitive wires lay close to the surface. Directing a little charge into his fingers, Jazz kneaded the protoform there and was rewarded by the sound of Prowl’s fans clicking on. Progress.

He couldn’t go straight for the valve yet. Jazz instead ran his glossa along the seams of Prowl’s pelvic girdle, dipping into the little gaps. He occasionally found the slight irregularity of a weld, nearly invisible now that Prowl’s chromeonanites had repopulated. It could still be felt, though. Prowl’s self-repair system wasn’t functioning at full power, and the parts that were working were busy forging his newspark. It would probably be awhile before he was fully healed.

The cover over Prowl’s spike stayed firmly closed as Jazz ran his

glossa over it. The component went into lockdown when carrying code activated. It was still sensitive, though, as evidenced by the way Prowl gasped and shifted.

Slowly, Jazz wandered lower as he worked his way closer to his goal. He wanted to see those valve lips plump up, opening to reveal the delicate anterior node. And then, below it, he would find the real prize. A mech needed to be good and relaxed to let their valve open up enough for comfortable penetration. Jazz would stay true to his earlier promise to not harm Prowl, and would draw out this foreplay as long as necessary to ensure his partner had a positive experience.

Prowl let out a shuddering sigh and one of his hands came down to rest on Jazz's helm. His fans hummed a little faster, and the protoform underneath Jazz's mouth grew warmer. Then, finally, the soft glow of Prowl's anterior node poked out from the hood of his valve.

Jazz traced his glossa around that node, close but not quite touching. There was a muffled moan, and Jazz glanced up to see that Prowl had put a hand over his mouth and was biting his finger. He'd have to see about solving that shyness later. Some cycle, he wanted to hear all the noises he could wring from the Praxian. For now, he just wanted Prowl to feel good.

Lapping at Prowl's entrance, Jazz tasted sweet lubricant and knew he was making progress. He dipped his glossa into the warm, wet opening and felt the valve calipers inside flex. He hated to think of what Prowl's assigned stud may have done to him. Had he just rammed in without any preparation? The drug administered to Prowl may have forced his frame to heat and relax, but it was still no substitute for foreplay. Had anyone done this for him before?

Well, they had time now, and Jazz considered himself somewhat of an expert at eating valve. When he finally turned his attention to Prowl's anterior node, he was rewarded by a soft whine as the Praxian's heels dug into the blankets under them.

A little electric current zipped from Prowl's node to the electro-receptors in Jazz's glossa, letting him taste the Praxian's charge. High, and getting higher. Wonderful. He didn't want Prowl to be able to think of anything except how good he felt.

Lubricant and conduction-fluid flooded Jazz's mouth and flowed down his chin as Prowl overloaded. He made no sound as he came, just suddenly went stiff before relaxing to twitch with the aftershocks. Jazz

continued his ministrations, until the last tremble had run from Prowl's frame and the Praxian lay limp.

Jazz sat up and wiped his chin, hands going to rub Prowl's thighs again. "You okay, mech?"

"That. That was." Prowl panted, looking up at Jazz with hazy blue optics.

"Good, I hope." Jazz said with a grin.

"Yes. Good." Prowl confirmed. He raised his head slightly to peer down at Jazz's still-closed modesty plating. "You didn't overload."

"Not yet." Jazz sat back on his heels and let his spike pressurize. "That was just the warm up. Ready for the main show?"

"There's more?" Prowl asked in disbelief.

"Lots more," Jazz confirmed. "Just relax, and I'll take care of you."

Prowl obediently lay back, relaxing much more easily now. A good overload had clearly taken some of the tension from his frame, just as Jazz had intended. He'd be happy to continue this way, the pleasure of seeing a partner satisfied was better than an overload, but the whole point of this exercise was for Jazz to donate transfluid to Prowl's frame. Spike-in-valve penetration to the completion of both parties would be necessary.

This time, Jazz started out with his fingers, slipping one inside of Prowl and probing the elastic walls. Even after an overload, he was still very tight. This would take some prep work.

As Jazz's fingers went to work, he set his glossa to the task of exploring Prowl's chest. Circling the transparasteel headlights and working along the seams of his bumper. Prowl's hand returned to his mouth, while his other fisted in the sheets beneath them.

Softly, Jazz kissed his way up the center seam of Prowl's chest until he reached the panel over the Praxian's spark chamber. It was warm with the heat of two sparks. Prowl's own, pulsing with arousal, and its precious little passenger. The femme that Jazz would be donating his own code and energy to. He wouldn't claim her if Prowl did not want him to, but if he did- well, Jazz would be proud to be her sire.

Jazz worked Prowl open until he could fit a second finger, carefully

scissoring his fingers to help the calipers stretch. He could feel that Prowl was relaxing, letting his frame move and feel. His charge was also growing again. Carrying mecha ran hot, their frames already amped up from supporting a second spark. They needed multiple overloads, to share necessary energy with their newsparks.

When Jazz was able to insert a third finger, he knew that Prowl was ready. He removed his hand and wiped fingers wet with lubricant down his length, watching Prowl's face as he lined up with his valve. His handsome features tightened as Jazz eased his way in, pausing to let the Praxian acclimate to the stretch. The last thing he wanted to do was cause Prowl pain, so he took it slowly. Until his frame shook from the strain of holding himself back.

But it was all worth it when their pelvic plating finally met. Jazz rocked, pulling out before thrusting back in, and watched as Prowl tossed his helm back. He bit down on his index finger again to muffle the sounds his vocalizer was making, and his vents huffed super-heated air in time with every one of Jazz's thrusts.

Giving into his earlier desire, Jazz bent down and gently nibbled on the tip of Prowl's chevron. The Praxian's engine roared, and Jazz grinned. So it *was* as sensitive as they all said. Jazz suddenly couldn't wait for Prowl to have his new wings, just to see what kind of noises he could wring from the Praxian with them. Assuming that they did this again.

They probably would. One night of interfacing wouldn't provide the transfluid needed to make a measurable difference in the sparkling's growth. They'd probably have to do this several times a decacycle to make it worthwhile. Jazz hoped that, after this, Prowl would see the activity as something pleasant rather than something to suffer through for his newspark.

As Jazz licked at Prowl's chevron, his hips kept up the rhythm of their arrays. Out and then in, the ridge at the base of his spike meeting Prowl's anterior node with a little zap each time. Prowl's valve hugged his spike tightly, blazing hot and deliciously wet. There was a little squelch every time Jazz drove himself back in, lubricant squirting out around his spike.

He wouldn't be able to last much longer. It didn't seem like Prowl would either. Jazz picked up the pace, bowing his helm to press his forehead against Prowl's bumper. The vibration of the Praxian's powerful Enforcer-grade engine reverberated through him, growing

stronger as their charge surged higher and higher.

Prowl tripped first, back arching and helm pressing back into the pillows as his entire frame shook with the force of his overload. His valve clenched down hard, bringing Jazz over with him as his spike was milked for all it was worth. Jazz kept rocking his hips, trying to force all of his transfluid into his partner. He wanted to give everything to Prowl and the newspark. Everything he had.

Jazz continued to thrust shallowly until the last of the aftershocks faded. Then, carefully, he eased himself out of Prowl and knelt on all fours over the Praxian, vents pouring excess heat. Beneath him, Prowl was dark and silent. He'd been knocked offline.

As wrung out as Jazz felt, he was never one to leave a partner to sit in their combined fluids. Fortunately, he kept a clean up kit in his berthside table. Pulling out a rag and some solvent, he quickly cleaned himself up before attending to Prowl. The Praxian didn't even twitch as Jazz carefully wiped away the lubricant and traces of transfluid from his inner thighs and around his valve. A touch to the node just got a brief, unconscious twitch of his legs.

That done, Jazz tossed the stained rag into a hamper on the other side of the room, then gently tugged the soiled bedding out from under Prowl's aft. That went into the hamper as well, then Jazz laid a clean blanket over the recharging Praxian and tucked it in. With a soft grumble, Prowl shifted onto his side and curled up slightly, one hand tucking under his helm. Well, wasn't that adorable.

Just as Jazz was getting ready to climb into the berth too, he heard a soft cry from the next room over. Bluestreak.

He hustled into the other berthroom and plucked the fussy sparkling from his containment berth, rocking him in his arms. "Shh, shh. It's alright Blue. It's alright."

Bluestreak tossed his helm, tears flowing out from closed optics. Jazz cradled the sparkling close to his own spark and returned to his room. When he set Bluestreak down against his carrier's abdomen, the sparkling curled in close and calmed. Soon, he was back in recharge.

Thinking that seemed like a capitol idea, Jazz crawled under the covers and snuggled up against Prowl's back, one hand draping over the Praxian's waist to rest on Bluestreak's helm while his chin tucked in against Prowl's neck. It was intensely comfortable. Soon, Jazz had joined the two in recharge.

Chapter End Notes

Amazing fanart for this chapter done by Hooty_Scribbles over on Instagram! https://www.instagram.com/p/DMO8K7EM-6i/?img_index=1

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

A sneaky peek into Prowl's POV. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

When Prowl awoke, he was warm and comfortable. It was the first time he'd really felt *warm* since the Fall. It seemed like he had been cold ever since the fires of Praxus stopped burning.

Waking in the ruins of Praxus had been a living nightmare. Prowl had been sitting at his work terminal, processing data, when alarms began to go off inside Enforcers Headquarters. That was the only warning they had before the bombs began to fall. The world exploded around him, the shockwave of the bombs shaking the city down to its foundations. All of the lights flickered and went dark as the powerplants were hit, then the ceiling fell in and all Prowl knew was pain.

He regained consciousness in absolute darkness. One wing was missing, and the other was pinned under something heavy. But the worst thing was that he couldn't feel his newspark. The pulse of light that had been growing next to his spark for the last quartex was gone. Prowl bowed his head and allowed himself to grieve. He crashed, at least once, from the emotional overload. Probably more than once. He would have gladly deactivated then and there, but something dragged him from his grief. There was still a bond on his spark. Somewhere, Bluestreak still functioned. The bond called out to Prowl like a homing beacon, urging him to go find his creation.

The darkness of the ruins was illuminated by the fires that consumed the broken city, fuelled by the energon that had spilled across Praxus. Prowl felt his paint begin to bubble as the scorching heat consumed him, almost unbearable. He needed to get out. Ripping his wing off was the ultimate last resort, but Prowl hardly noticed the pain. He would get to Bluestreak.

Crawling through the debris that had once been Enforcer headquarters, Prowl clawed his way to the surface. He came across grey frame after grey frame, his coworkers laying where they had fallen. Many were crushed, puddles of energon oozing out from piles of wall and ceiling only fueling the fires. When he found an intact frame that had not been burned yet, Prowl paused to drain out the remaining energon. At first, he simply ripped open the main arterial in

the throat and drank his fill, but once his tank was full, he used the corpse-energon to fill the empty ration cubes he'd had in subspace.

By the time Prowl reached the street, the fires had burned themselves out and everything was still. With the fires gone, it was cold. So cold. Prowl shivered as he picked his way through the rubble. His gps told him where he was, though nothing was recognizable. So instead, he followed his spark. The bright spot that represented Bluestreak was far away now, across the planet. No matter, he would get there or deactivate trying.

Things got hazy after that. He remembered driving across the plains until his tires gave out, crawling through the sewers to avoid border patrols, and stealing energon in back alleys. Then, finally, he had felt Bluestreak was near. When he saw another mech holding his sparkling, something inside him snapped and he attacked. It wasn't his proudest moment. But then and there, half-starved and desperate, he had thought of nothing but getting his sparkling back.

And then, there was Jazz. Who had taken such good care of Bluestreak, who obviously cared so much for the sparkling even though he was not his own. He offered Prowl his home, allowing him to stay with his creation, and also offered to care for the Praxian until he was recovered. For apparently no reason except that he was a good spark.

Though Prowl would never admit it, he was discovering he liked being fussed over. Jazz was always smothering him in blankets, as if he knew that Prowl couldn't seem to get warm, and plying him with all varieties of delicious fuel. He never tried to limit or restrict Prowl's time with Bluestreak. In fact, he encouraged Prowl to play with his creation, to fuel him, to cuddle with him in berth.

And now Prowl was curled up in Jazz's berth, a pile of pillows under his helm and a fuzzy blanket draped over him. The cold was gone, replaced by soothing heat that filled his frame. Prowl shifted a hand to lay his palm against his abdomen, which was hot from the forge inside him. It was working properly now, no longer stressed from struggling in his cold frame. Most likely, it was making good use of Jazz's donation.

Shifting his legs, Prowl felt a dull ache in his pelvic girdle. He was a little sore, but it wasn't bad. Certainly nothing like his previous experiences with interface, which had made him limp to his workstation the cycle after.

He wanted to stay here forever, ensconced in the wonderful warmth, but his fuel tank urged him to get up. Ratchet had been very emphatic that he keep topped off, which meant he'd have to get up and out to the kitchen, where hopefully Jazz had some fuel made. He'd managed to recharge all the way until mid-cycle again, so there was a good chance lunch would be ready soon.

No sooner had Prowl thrown back the blankets when the door opened and Jazz entered with Bluestreak in his arms.

"Pow!" The sparkling cried happily, making Prowl's spark soar.

As Prowl's spark grew light and happy, he felt an odd echo of the feeling. A second pulse, a few nanokliks beside his own. His newspark.

Prowl raised a hand to his spark in surprise, looking down at his chest. Had he really felt her? Was she active again?

"You alright?" Jazz questioned with some concern.

"Yes, I am." Prowl reassured him, rubbing the metal over his spark thoughtfully. "She was just expressing her happiness to me."

"The newspark?" A grin stretched across Jazz's face. "That's great, Prowl! She must know you love her."

"I hope she does." Prowl wasn't sure quite what he felt. Emotions were difficult for him, compressed and fragmented by the power demands of his tactical unit. He hoped that this warm feeling was love, so he gathered it up and sent it through the bond to his newspark. She seemed to bathe in the feeling, pulsing with contentment, before settling back down to her usual rhythm against her carrier's spark.

"It's nice to see you smile, Prowl." Jazz said softly, an odd expression on his face. A quirk of his lips, a gentle glow from his visor. Prowl wished he were better at reading other mecha.

"Oh." Prowl raised a hand to his lips curiously. He had so often been called cold, unfeeling, and stern. Was he really smiling just then?

"Come on, I've got lunch just about done." Jazz held out a hand to him.

Prowl let himself be pulled to his pedes, steadying himself on the wall as Jazz turned to pick up Bluestreak. To get to the kitchen, Prowl had

to put a hand on Jazz's shoulder and lean on the smaller mech. He was getting very tired of having to be helped everywhere, but he couldn't deny that he was wobbly without his wings to balance him. The world seemed dull and quiet without the extra sensory data that they normally provided him, and his helm spun briefly as he got fully upright.

The short walk to the kitchen just reminded Prowl how much he *ached*. His welds pulled uncomfortably, his repaired leg stung with every step, and his back throbbed in time. It completely overpowered the slight discomfort in his valve, which was fading quickly.

Lunch was, as always, a dish unknown to Prowl. He was a bit bewildered how there could be so much different ways to prepare energon and minerals. Though there were a few bars and restaurants open to one of his caste, Prowl had preferred to save his creds in the hopes of one day buying out his contract. It wasn't like he had anyone to go out with anyway.

Bluestreak went at his lunch with enthusiasm, though the sparkling still seemed to be having trouble with the idea of actually *consuming* the fuel. He squealed happily as he slammed his hands down into the mushed energon on his tray. Next to him, Jazz sat with a spoon and patiently slipped fuel between Bluestreak's lips when the sparkling was distracted.

Jazz was such a good caretaker. Prowl was trying very hard to be a creator to Bluestreak, but often found himself at a loss for what to do. Even if he had been fully mobile, he would still probably need assistance. Cold Constructs were not programmed with "creator protocols."

The thought of giving up his sparkling, though, made his spark clench with dread. In Praxus, Prowl had looked forward to his scheduled visits with Bluestreak with everything he had. And when the sparkling's caretakers decided his time was up and forced him out, his spark broke. He had made plans, so many half-completed scenarios, for how to escape Praxus with Bluestreak, but none of them had been practical.

Now, though, here he was. Away from Praxus and able to spend as much time with his sparkling as he wanted. His contract-owners were deactivated, which did mean that crimpers could legally detain him and sell him to a new owner, but Prowl suspected that Jazz would kick up a fuss if that happened. It was the first time anyone had given

a scrap about him. It made Prowl feel. . . something. Something positive, but he wasn't quite sure what.

That care had been on full display the night before. Prowl hadn't been entirely certain what to expect from interface, but Jazz had been so gentle. Considerate. Prowl never knew that interfacing could feel so good. He felt a little bad for lying there, not making any attempt to stimulate Jazz in return, but it had all just been so overwhelming. Next time, he would try harder.

Once lunch was done, Bluestreak was cleaned up and Prowl shifted to his usual perch on the couch. He was starting to suspect that, once he was ambulatory again, the couch cushion would be left with a permanent impression of his aft. He certainly spent enough time sitting on it.

It wasn't all bad, though. Bluestreak often chose to either cuddle in his lap or play at his pedes, and fuzzy blanket kept in the warmth of his forge. Despite recharging all morning, Prowl felt himself start to nod off again. He had managed to work normal shifts all through his carriage with Bluestreak, but now, any time he sat for more than a few kliks tiredness overtook him. He had exhausted all of his reserves dragging himself to Iacon, and had nothing left.

That evening, after Bluestreak had been put down for the night, Prowl sat on the edge of the berth so that Jazz could change the temp-patches on his back. And they finally had time to talk.

"So." Jazz started first. "About last night. What it alright?"

"Your performance was very satisfactory." Prowl assured him.

Jazz laughed, and the sound seemed to buoy Prowl's spark. The Polyhexian had such a wonderful laugh, full of honest amusement but never mocking. Prowl would never tired of hearing it.

"I'm glad to know I passed your performance review." Jazz teased, gently applying mineral cream to Prowl's severed connections. It was an odd sensation. Not painful, not with his receptors inactive, but he could still feel the slight changes in pressure from being touched somewhere normally well hidden. "Would you like a repeat?"

"Yes." Prowl was surprised to realize that he did, in fact, want to interface again. Not because he wanted the transfluid for his newspark, though that was part of it. But also because Jazz had made it feel so good. And he wanted to feel that way again.

“Alright.” Jazz smoothed fresh temp-patches over Prowl’s wounds and put away the medical supplies. “Make room in your schedule tomorrow night?”

Prowl chuckled. “I think I can pencil you in.”

Chapter 11

An uncomfortable prickling sensation awoke Prowl unusually early. Early enough that Jazz was still in recharge, spooning against his back. Bluestreak wasn't with them, which marked the first time that the sparkling had managed to recharge through the night on his own. Though Prowl certainly didn't mind recharging with his sparkling, doing so did make certain night time activities. . . difficult.

Prowl never knew that one could actually enjoy being fragged, but Jazz was showing him how it could be enjoyable for both parties. Very enjoyable. Was this why his spark felt so odd?

The prickling turned into a *tug*, sharp and insistent, and Prowl let out an involuntary gasp. He pressed a hand to his chest and hissed at how sore the metal felt. Sore, and hot. Whatever this was, it had to do with the sparkling.

"Mmnn, Prowl?" Jazz's visor flickered on dimly when he felt his berthpartner shift. "You okay?"

"I'm not sure, something feels-ah!" Prowl curled up as the tug turned into a burn, the sensation akin to someone pulling off a piece of his spark. Which was, he realized, the gist of what was happening. "The sparkling is descending."

"Are you alright?" Jazz sat up and laid a gentle hand on his shoulder. "Do you want me to call Ratchet?"

He had gotten through Bluestreak's descension with minimal fuss. Everything about his previous carriage had been incredibly average. This carriage, however, had been anything but. What if she still wasn't strong enough?

"Perhaps you should." Prowl wanted the backup in case something went wrong.

"Alright." Jazz pressed a finger to his audial as he activated his comm, sending off a message to the medic. "He says he'll be here as soon as he's finished with his current patient. Do you need anything in the meantime?"

“No.” Prowl shifted until he was sitting up slightly, back supported by the copious pillows of the berth. A reclined position was recommended during descension. “Except- would you stay?”

“Of course.” Jazz sat next to him, a steady, reassuring presence. “Is there anything I can do?”

“I-“ Prowl hesitated. Last time, he had been in a medical room being observed by the Enforcer’s chief medic, who was there to ensure that nothing went wrong. The mech had been perfectly competent, but detached and clinical. His duty had been to ensure that the sparkling Praxus had put so much work into separated cleanly. “I’m not sure.”

“Alright.” Jazz didn’t press. “Then I’ll just sit here with you.”

And so he did, until the habsuite’s doorbell chimed and he had to get up to go let Ratchet in.

The medic wasted no time on pleasantries as he bustled into the berthroom and scanned Prowl. Whatever he found must have been good, though, because a smile cracked his weathered faceplate.

“You’re right, Prowl, you’ve gone into descension.” Ratchet confirmed his earlier theory. “It looks like everything is going smoothly, though. She may take a little while to fully separate from your spark, which is common in traumatic carries. Just stay calm, and reassure her that everything is okay.”

Calm, right, he could do that. Prowl concentrated on the bright little spark shivering next to his. She seemed nervous. Understandable. Her time attached to his life-force had been anything but comfortable. Taking a deep, calming vent, Prowl did his best to send her a soothing pulse. There was no danger, no reason to be stressed. She could move to her new home without any worry.

“That’s perfect. Just keep that up.” Ratchet said encouragingly. “It will be uncomfortable for a few joors, but as long as you stay relaxed, I don’t see any reason this won’t go smoothly.”

“Her frame is ready?” Prowl wanted confirmation.

“Her spark chamber is complete, that’s all she needs right now.” Ratchet reassured him. “Now, I have some other duties to attend to today. You have my comm code, so does Jazz. Ping me if you start to feel anything more than discomfort and mild pain.”

“Of course.” Prowl didn’t want to keep the medic from his other patients, as much as he wanted to keep him nearby. “Thank you.”

Ratchet patted his knee and put away his scanner. “Lay back, relax, and if you need anything, I’m sure Jazz will wait on you servo and pede.”

“Can do.” Jazz chipped in.

Ratchet took his leave, and Jazz settled back in at Prowl’s berthside. That is, until a sound Prowl couldn’t hear caught the Polyhexian’s attention.

“Oh, sounds like Bluestreak’s up.” Jazz stood. “Want me to bring him in here?”

“Please.” Prowl tried not to grumble at how frustrating it was being half-deaf. He should have been able to hear his creation stirring in the next room.

Jazz came back in with Bluestreak in his arms. “Okay, Baby Blue. Ri Ri isn’t feeling too good, so we gotta be quiet, alright?”

Bluestreak put a finger to his lips and went “Shhhhhh.” In what passed for a quiet voice for the sparkling.

“That’s right.” Jazz gently set Bluestreak down in the blankets. The sparkling immediately crawled into Prowl’s lap and curled up.

“Ri Ri?” Bluestreak asked softly as he looked up at his carrier.

“What?” Prowl whispered.

“Sorry. Is it alright that he calls you that?” Jazz asked, perching on the edge of the berth.

More than alright. Prowl never thought he’d get to hear that name applied to him. Abruptly, Prowl thought he might cry. He’d been doing that a lot lately. His optics burned as fluid gathered. “Yes. Yes, it’s alright. He was. Not allowed to before.”

Fortunately, Jazz seemed to understand. “Well, he can call you Ri Ri now. Nobody’ll stop him.”

Prowl rubbed a finger between Bluestreak’s wings, managing a watery smile at the high-pitched little purr he got in response. The pinching and pulling of his spark continued, but seemed more tolerable with

the warm weight of Bluestreak in his lap.

“Hey, would you like a little music?” Jazz offered.

“Music?” Prowl questioned. He had never much listened to music before, though he had heard some of the buskers that had worked Praxus’ streets.

“Just something quiet and relaxing, promise.” Jazz got up and went into one of the other rooms, returning with a small stringed instrument in hand. When he plucked it, a sweet sound filled the room.

It was relaxing. The sound filled the room, taking the tension from Prowl’s shoulders as he sank back into the pillows supporting him. The newspark inside him seemed to hear it too, though she lacked audials, pulsing in time as she pulled further away from her carrier’s spark.

Time was measured by the tugging of his spark, the vibration of Bluestreak’s purr against his abdomen, and the melody of Jazz’s music.

An indeterminate amount of time later, Bluestreak let out a cheep and the music abruptly stopped. Prowl opened his optics to see Jazz setting his instrument aside and reaching forward for Bluestreak.

“Sorry, but it looks like baby Blue needs fueling.” Jazz picked the sparkling up and opened his chest plating, holding Bluestreak to his breast so that he could suckle.

Prowl watched with keen optics. He’d never had the privilege of fueling his sparkling from his own systems. His auxiliary fueling system had been kept in forced shutdown all through his previous carry, preventing his pouches from ever filling in the first place. Raising a hand to rub his chest, Prowl wondered if the coding had come back online now. Would he get to pouchfeed this sparkling?

He winced at the odd feel of his spark stretching out, leaders reaching for the separating piece of it. Then, like the surface tension of a bubble breaking, there was an odd popping sensation and the newspark came free.

“Oh.” Prowl said softly, feeling the pinprick point of warmth traveling down into his gestation chamber.

“You alright?” Jazz checked in.

“Yes. She fully separated just now.” Prowl moved his hand from his chest down to his abdomen. He was much smaller than he had been at this point with Bluestreak. Despite Ratchet’s reassurances that everything was alright, he still worried.

“I’ll call Ratch’ back, have him check on you.” Jazz set Bluestreak back down into Prowl’s lap and commed the medic.

Ratchet returned a little while later, checking on the newspark’s integration with a pleased hum. “She’s made it into her spark chamber just fine. Her spark is pulsing strong, and the sentio metallico is energized. A few more decacycles, and you’ll probably feel her start to move.”

“Her frame growth is on track?” Prowl wanted verification.

“Still a little behind the curve, but no reason to worry. She’s progressing just fine.” Ratchet turned the screen of the scanner towards him. “See?”

Displayed on the screen was a shadowy blob, which Prowl supposed looked like a curled up frame if one squinted. The only thing that was clear was the glowing spark right in the middle. Having not seen any of the scans when carrying Bluestreak, Prowl had no basis to compare it to. “Then the transfluid donations have been helping?”

“Transfluid donations-?” Ratchet turned and fixed a sharp glare on Jazz, who held his hands up in supplication.

“We been interfacing every few nights.” Jazz admitted.

“Jazz-“ Ratchet’s engine growled as the medic’s infamous temper flared up.

“It was my choice.” Prowl butted in before Ratchet could lay into Jazz. “I asked for it. Jazz has been very kind to me, do not worry.”

Ratchet grumbled, but his flared plating settled slightly. “Well. The donations have been improving her growth. But if *he* does anything to make you feel uncomfortable, comm me.”

“I will.” Prowl promised, though he doubted he would ever need to

take the medic up on that offer.

“Well then.” Ratchet subspaced his scanner and shot another *look* at Jazz that promised that the two were going to have *words* later in private. “I should have your wings ready next decacycle, so I will see you then.”

“Actually-“ Prowl stopped the medic before he could leave. “Could you check on one more thing for me?”

Ratchet raised an optical ridge. “What’s up?”

“Could you check to see if my auxiliary fueling system is online?” Prowl requested. “It was put into force shutdown during my last carriage.”

“Of course it was.” Ratchet snorted, muttering about good-for-nothing Praxian Enforcers as he cabled into Prowl’s systems. “Alright, there we go. Looks like its still offline. Do you want me to activate it?”

“Please.”

Prowl felt an unfamiliar piece of coding activate, and his chest tingled briefly as new protocols came online.

“There.” Ratchet disconnected and spooled his medical cable. “I don’t see any issues with it, but if it gives you any trouble, let me know.”

“Thank you, Ratchet.” Prowl bowed his head. The servos in his back gave an aborted twitch, trying to lower wings that were no longer there.

“Now then. I’ve got you all scheduled for your surgery.” Ratchet pinged him an appointment notification. “I will have to put you in stasis for it, so plan to be in the hospital for several joor.”

Prowl perked up a little at that. He wanted his wings back, so badly. “I look forward to it.”

“I’m sure you do.” Ratchet chuckled. “Alright. Keep fueling and resting, I will see you next decacycle.”

With that, the medic took his leave.

“Want to nap for a bit?” Jazz asked once Ratchet had gone.

“No.” Though Prowl’s spark still ached a little from the separation,

now that the process was complete, he suddenly felt his low fuel tank acutely. "I'd like to fuel. Would you help me to the kitchen?"

"Alright. Let me put Blue in his playpen, then I'll come back and fetch you." Jazz scooped the sparkling up.

"And then, would you play some more music?" Prowl requested softly.

Jazz smiled. "Of course."

Chapter 12

Though Prowl had wanted to walk into the hospital under his own power, Jazz insisted that he use a wheelchair. Prowl was too impatient to have his wings installed to argue the point. Despite the blocks still cutting off his disconnected sensors, Prowl's shoulders and back *ached* with the need to have his missing limbs back.

"Alright, up on the berth." Ratchet helped Prowl stand and get onto the medical berth for an examination. Jazz and Bluestreak were shooed out, to find some place to entertain themselves until Prowl was done.

Prowl sat on the medberth with restrained calm as Ratchet scanned him and checked over all his vitals.

"Well, you've gained some weight since last time, that's good." Ratchet complimented. "I want to see you keep that up."

He was trying, he really was. Prowl had a noticeable belly now, and his thighs and hips were starting to thicken. Still, he knew he was not yet at the condition he had been during his last carry. Fortunately, eating more of Jazz's delicious fuel wouldn't be too much of an imposition.

"Alright, lay down on your side and I'll put you into medical stasis." Ratchet instructed.

Obeying, Prowl got settled on his side. Resting one hand on his belly, over the slight weight of his newspark, he closed his optics and slipped into blackness.

When Prowl awoke, his systems were still fuzzy with the effects of strong painkillers. Still, he could feel that something was different. When someone moved behind him, the air currents swirled across new sensors and lit up an area of Prowl's processor that had been dormant for too long.

"Can you feel this?" Ratchet's voice came from behind him, followed shortly by a poke to the lower edge of one wing.

“Yes.” Prowl’s wing didn’t move at the poke, but he did feel it.

“And here?” Another poke. Prowl responded in the affirmative again.

This routine kept up until Ratchet had covered all the major quadrants of both wings to his satisfaction. Then, finally, Prowl was allowed to sit up.

“Alright, I’m taking the movement blocks off now.” Ratchet made some adjustments under Prowl’s dorsal plating, and suddenly his wings drooped from their neutral position.

Prowl raised, lowered, and waved his wings at Ratchet’s command, testing their full range of motion. The joints ached a little, but the pain was dulled by whatever medications were still in his system.

“Okay, I think everything is in order.” Ratchet set aside his tools. “I don’t want you trying to walk until the medications wear off. Tomorrow at the earliest. Would you be alright with me sending one of my assistant medics to do the physical therapy with you?”

Ratchet had become a familiar, comforting presence, but Prowl was aware he couldn’t monopolize all of the old medic’s time. Surely, Ratchet had other mecha in need of help. “Yes, that would be fine.”

“Then you can expect medic First Aid at mid-cycle tomorrow to get you on your pedes again.” Ratchet pinged Prowl with his discharge datawork, including strict instructions to stay off his pedes until First Aid could come assist him. Then, he helped Prowl down into a wheelchair and wheeled him out to see Jazz and Bluestreak waiting for him.

Jazz gave a cheeky wirewolf-whistle when he saw Prowl. “Hey, looking good!”

Bluestreak echoed it with a chirp of his own, little wings rising up at the sight of his carrier. And this time, Prowl could raise his own wings in response. It was a good feeling.

Medic First Aid showed up right at mid-cycle, as promised. He was a slightly built ambulance, obviously young, with much more cheer than Ratchet. He patiently helped Prowl do conditioning stretches for his legs, then assisted the Praxian in doing a lap around the living room. Then they progressed to a walker, with Prowl feeling slightly

foolish as he carefully limped along. Jazz didn't say anything, though, as he watched. Bluestreak seemed to take this as the perfect opportunity to practice his walking as well, and happily toddled along at his carrier's side.

By the time Prowl had progressed to walking unassisted, he was sore and tired but satisfied. It was good to get around on his own again, even if the going was slow and his repaired leg ached.

"Alright, I think that's enough for today." First Aid said as Prowl eased himself back down onto the couch. "You can walk a little, but take it slow and careful. I'll be back tomorrow to do some more exercises with you."

That night, Prowl was able to walk on his own to the berthroom. And, after another cycle of work with First Aid, he was given the all clear. He could walk again, for limited amounts of time, at least. The leg strut that Ratchet had welded was still mending, since his repair systems were more concerned with building the newspark, and he wasn't supposed to stress any part of his frame.

It meant he was now allowed to do something simple, like take a stroll to the nearby park. Jazz immediately suggested doing so, but Prowl hesitated.

"Would it be safe?" Prowl questioned.

"Well, I don't think anywhere on Cybertron is 100% safe." Jazz admitted. "The Decepticons are tricky. But Iacon is probably as good as you'll get."

That wasn't quite what Prowl meant. "The Decepticons are a problem, yes. But also, I am a contracted mech. If someone runs my serial number and sees that my contract-holder is deceased, they could have me sold."

Jazz immediately bristled. "Well, for one, I'd never let that happen to you. Nor would Prime. I'll get him to annul your contract myself. But really, Prowl, you probably don't have to worry. Nobody can run your serial number, all of Praxus' records were destroyed in the bombing."

Prowl stared at him in surprise. "Would you really do that?"

"Do what?"

"Ask the Prime to annul my contract." Prowl clarified.

“Of course!” Jazz exclaimed, “In fact, I’ll do it right now.”

Jazz got on the comm with the Prime, and Prowl waited in suspense. Finally, Jazz hung up with a chuckle.

“Alright, that’s it. OP says that if there’s any records of your contract left, they’re null now.” Jazz gave him a grin, “You’re free.”

Free. The word stunned Prowl, and he sat back in shock. He had dreamed of it, when in the barracks late at night, made plans for it even, but he had finally achieved it. Free. He could do anything he wanted, and no owner could force him into submission. The planet was open to him. Prowl only regretted that it had taken the obliteration of his home city-state to achieve his dream.

“So, how about that trip to the park?” Jazz prompted.

“Yes, that sounds nice.”

The park wasn’t far away, though it still seemed like a long walk to Prowl. It was nice, though. Jazz was at his side, keeping to his slow pace without complaint. And between them, Bluestreak held onto each of their hands, cheering when his two caretakers swung him every few steps.

It was a small park, with a little fountain, a crystal garden, and a play area for sparklings. Several were already there, chattering happily as they played on the slide and clambered up the play structure.

Bluestreak wasn’t quite old enough to go clambering up the tower, but there was another, smaller structure off to the side for younger sparklings. There was a pair there already, one yellow and one red, sculpting a castle out of silica.

“Go on.” Jazz urged, giving Bluestreak a little push. “Go play.”

With one last glance at his caretakers, the sparkling toddled over to the silicabox and chirped at the two building their lopsided castle. They chirped back and, thus reassured, Bluestreak joined in.

Prowl, meanwhile, limped over to a nearby bench and sat down to watch his sparkling play. Jazz joined him, close enough that their thighs touched.

“First time I’ve seen him play with other sparklings.” Jazz commented.

“He was not allowed to, in Praxus.” Prowl replied quietly. “He was expected to go through accelerated learning curriculum to prepare him for upgrades.”

“Yeah, that’s about what I figured.” Jazz nodded. “Well, he can play all he wants now.”

“That’s good.” Prowl watched as the red sparkling let out a roar worthy of a predacon and set about smashing the castle they had been building. Bluestreak laughed and joined him, while the golden sparkling pouted. “His first vorn creation-day is coming up. I had thought, maybe, we should do something.”

“That sounds like fun.” Jazz nodded. “Maybe we could take him to Six Lasers.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s a big theme park.” Jazz explained. “Mostly for older younglings and adults, but there’s stuff for little sparklings too.”

“Then we’ll make plans for it.” Prowl would just have to do a little research when he got home.

Home. When did he start to think of Jazz’s habsuite as home?

“Hey, Jazz. That your lil’ bit?” A red Iaconian came over, speaking in a rough but friendly voice.

“Oh, hey Ironhide.” Jazz greeted the other mech with a grin. “Yeah, that’s Bluestreak. Those your two monsters?” He tilted his head towards the red and golden sparklings, which had progressed to wrestling in the silica while Bluestreak cheered them on.

“Yeah, that’s Sunny and Sides.” Ironhide leaned against their bench companionably. “Pulled ‘em out of the pits of Kaon before everything went to the Pit over there. Little feral predacons they are. Still working on getting them civilized.”

Jazz laughed. “Well, if any mech can do that, it’d be you. Hey, this here is Prowl, Bluestreak’s carrier.”

“Pleased to meet you, Ironhide.” Prowl greeted cordially, dipping his wings.

“You’re the one that hauled himself outta Praxus, right?” Ironhide asked.

“Ah, yes.” Prowl wondered how many mecha knew about him.

“Well, it’s good to meet you, mech. Terrible mess in Praxus, I’m glad to see you recovering.” Ironhide sighed and walked over to the silicabox, where his two sparklings had progressed to clawing and biting. “‘Scuse me, I’d better go break that up.”

As Ironhide pulled Sunny and Sides apart, Bluestreak toddled back over to his caretakers.

“Ri Ri.” Bluestreak stretched his hands up to Prowl.

“Hello, bitlet.” Prowl was finally able to bend down and pick up his sparkling. “Come, perhaps the slides would be a bit quieter.”

Standing up, Prowl took Bluestreak over to the smallest slide in the park and set him down at the top. Jazz, meanwhile, crouched at the bottom and encouraged the sparkling to slide down to him.

Several joor later, Bluestreak had tuckered himself out and fell into recharge while Prowl carried him home. Though his leg and hips ached, Prowl would never give up a chance to hold his sparkling.

“He’s recharging like a rock.” Jazz observed with amusement as Prowl set Bluestreak down in his containment berth.

“Yes, he is.” Prowl said fondly, leaning down to kiss the sparkling’s helm. “It seems like he will recharge for awhile. Shall we-?” He flicked his wings.

“Oh, are you gonna give me a chance to get hands on those pretty wings?” Jazz asked teasingly.

Prowl shivered at the idea. If Jazz treated his wings with the same touch as the rest of his frame, that sounded like a very pleasurable end to the day indeed. “I might be persuaded.”

“Well, then. Let’s take this to the other room, shall we?”

Lying down on Jazz’s berth, Prowl spread his wings invitingly. Jazz’s hands caressed the flat expanses of metal, lighting up all of the new sensors. Prowl let out a moan as the tips of his wings were tweaked,

and felt heat flood his frame. It swirled and pooled in his lower belly, valve lubricating in anticipation. And when Jazz slid into him, he felt like he was home.

Chapter 13

Six Lasers over Cybertron was an immense, sprawling amusement park full of a wide variety of flashy, glittering attractions. Attendance was restricted to the upper classes, which made Prowl wonder just how Jazz had managed to pull tickets for them. The park was divided into sections, with one area containing rides geared for small sparklings, so it was in that direction that Prowl and Jazz headed with Bluestreak.

The sparkling loved their first stop, a sound-based attraction of various circles and squares that each made a different noise when stepped on or hit. Hand in hand, Jazz and Bluestreak danced around the playfield, a cacophony of silly sounds following them as they went. Prowl sat on a nearby bench and watched, a small smile on his face despite the combined noise of multiple sparklings and creators at play starting to give him a processor-ache. He wished he could get up and go play with them, but his medical orders to take it easy and not walk or stand more than necessary still stood. Some day soon, he'd be able to run around with his sparkling.

Once Bluestreak finally tired of the music game, they went and got some candied energon from a nearby kiosk. The sparkling was a little confused by the little glowing lumps, but quickly warmed up to them once he realized how sweet they were. Prowl was also pleasantly surprised, and found himself quickly downing his portion and wishing for more. Candy was not on his dietary list, but surely a little wouldn't hurt? Jazz seemed to sense this, and chuckled before buying another packet just for Prowl.

Their next stop was a low-key, sparkling friendly rollercoaster. Prowl strapped himself in with Bluestreak in his lap, Jazz at his side. The car rumbled its way along the track, rolling up and down and rocking from side to side. From the way Bluestreak was squealing, he was thoroughly enjoying the ride.

There was a jungle gym, with things to climb and slides and textured objects that made strange noises. Bluestreak was visibly wary of the many other sparklings playing on the structure, but with some encouragement from Jazz he hesitantly began to play. Some day,

Prowl hoped, he would get over his anxiety over other sparklings. Curse the caretakers who had raised him for half a vorn without any interaction with others his age.

Prowl couldn't quite manage to swing his leg over the back of one of the carved zap-ponies that filled the carousel, so he took a seat in one of the stationary "chariots" and watched as Jazz set Bluestreak into the saddle of the zap-pony in front of him. Bluestreak twisted around to wave at his carrier, then clutched the pole holding up his pony as the ride started and he began to slowly "gallop" up and down. Jazz stood next to him, holding him securely in place as they circled around and around.

The music of the ride was loud and cheery, almost covering the noise of the other sparklings and creators enjoying the ride. It took a moment for Prowl to realize that something was wrong. He could hear distant screaming, and not the kind from a park-goer enjoying a thrill ride.

A glance up at Jazz showed that the Polyhexian had heard it too. The two stared at each other for a moment, before suddenly their ride ground to a halt and the lights and music cut out.

With the canned music silenced, the sound of screaming became more audible. Murmuring creators started removing their creations from the zap-ponies, looking to the ride operator to see what was going on.

"I'm sorry, I don't know what happened. The ride just cut out-" The operator toggled a switch on his control board, but nothing happened.

Prowl went to access his comm, but was greeted by only fuzzy static. Someone was using a comm jammer somewhere nearby.

The sound of blaster fire reached his audials, and Prowl stood. Something was very wrong.

Around them, the other mecha heard the blastershots and panicked, scattering in the direction of the nearest park exit. Jazz scooped up Bluestreak and grabbed Prowl's hand, hurrying as quickly as they could with Prowl's limp.

But the surge of the crowd stopped suddenly at the gates. Prowl peered over helms and was just able to make out a pair of heavily built mecha with weapons in their hands, blocking the park's exit. Both had bold purple sigils on their chests. Decepticons.

They wouldn't be getting out this way. And Prowl was willing to bet all of the other exits would be covered as well. New plan.

"Come on." Prowl hissed, tugging Jazz away from the crowd at the gate. Fortunately, Jazz didn't argue. He just followed, Bluestreak in his arms.

Nearby was an enormous set of slides, held up by a latticework of struts. Not an ideal hiding place, but it was closest. Prowl folded his wings and ducked under the beams, working deeper into the dimly lit space. From this vantage point, they were able to see out but it would be difficult to see in.

"Alright, you stay here." Jazz thrust Bluestreak into Prowl's arms. Along with something else.

Prowl stared down at the blaster that had been shoved into his hand. How had Jazz gotten it through the security checks at the gates? "Where did you-?"

"Later." Jazz cut him off. "Stay here, keep quiet. I'll be back as soon as I can."

"Wait-" But before Prowl could implore him to stay, Jazz had crawled back out and was gone. Prowl itched to follow him, but a whimper from Bluestreak in his arms stopped him.

"It'll be alright," Prowl tried to sooth his sparkling, rocking him a little. "We will be okay."

It burned, hiding in the dark with no information as to what was happening. Prowl was used to having constant data at his fingertips, planning for all contingencies. Now, all he could do was crouch amongst the struts of the amusement park ride, audials and wings perked for the slightest noise or movement.

What were the Decepticons doing at an amusement park anyway? Taking hostages, or implementing a mass slaughter? Prowl thought of the terror of the bombs falling on Praxus, and his spark flared. He *would not* let the Decepticons take any more lives.

There was a shiver against his spark, and Prowl realized that he was scaring his newspark. Again. Though she was now in her frame in his gestation tank, her spark was still supported by his own and she was strongly affected by his moods.

Prowl did his best to calm his spark, not wanting to frighten her, but it was difficult. Anxiety and anger roiled. Hatred for the Decepticons, and fear for his sparklings. Fear for Jazz too, wherever the Polyhexian had gotten off to. Prowl hoped he wasn't planning to fight off the Decepticons on his own. Hopefully, he was finding a way to escape the park and get help.

Voices. Prowl's wings twitched, and he sank deeper into the shadows.

"Why do we care so much 'bout some dumb park again?" A deep, rough voice growled.

"Cause this is a decadent symbol of the upper class." Another voice replied. "Look at all these high-faluting mecha, spending gobs of shanix while poor mecha starve in the gutter."

Pedesteps were coming closer. Prowl could see them now. A tall, grey mech with treads on his legs, and a slighter flight model with broad wings. Both carried blasters in their hands.

In Prowl's arms, Bluestreak let out a whimper. Prowl tried to shush him, but it was too late. The flier's wings twitched, and the barrels of two blasters swung in their direction.

"Alright, who's in there! Come on out!" The flier shouted.

Prowl subspaced his blaster and shifted Bluestreak over his shoulder. The sparkling mag'd onto his dorsal plating and clung tight, hunkering down between his carrier's wings. It was the most effective way for Prowl to protect him, and left both hands free.

Stepping out into the light, Prowl held up his hands to show he was unarmed. He was actually a little glad he was visibly gravid, hopefully the Decepticons would think he was nothing but a defenseless carrier.

"Please, do not fire." Prowl did his best to pitch his voice to sound frightened and meek. "I am carrying, and I have my young sparkling with me."

And indeed, the tight stances of the two Decepticons relaxed slightly.

"Alright, get moving." The tank waved his blaster, indicating he wanted Prowl to head for the center of the park. "Do whatever we say, maybe we won't hurt you or your bit."

"Yes, of course." Prowl played up his limp, moving slowly in the

direction he was being herded. Bluestreak shivered against his back, crying softly, and Prowl wished he could do more to reassure his sparkling. In his belly, his newspark shifted restlessly. In any other moment, Prowl would have celebrated feeling his newspark's first movements, but now, he could only hope she wouldn't be a distraction.

"Come on, hurry up." The tank nudged him with the barrel of his blaster.

"Sorry." Prowl limped a little faster. "I broke my leg last quartex, I have trouble walking."

"Yeah, whatever." The tank harrumphed, keeping pace at his side.

Having dismissed him as a threat, the two Decepticons turned their attention outward. Looking for other mecha trying to hide, no doubt. Their guns lowered from their alert positions until the barrels were pointed at the ground.

As they approached another ride, Prowl took his chance. Dropping suddenly, Prowl kicked and spun. Both Decepticons went down hard onto their backs as their legs were swept out from under them. Then, Prowl took off at a run.

The nearby attraction was a 'dark ride', where cars on tracks went inside a building full of frightening images meant to scare the riders. It was almost pitch black on the inside, and was a maze of walls and barriers. Prowl turned up the sensors in his wings to the maximum, 'seeing' in the dark as best as he could.

"Alright, little grounder. Come out, come out where ever you are." The flier entered first. His wings were almost as sensitive as a Praxian's, letting him get around in the dark ride as well. Behind him, Prowl could see the biolights of the tank, who couldn't see in the dark and had no built-in headlights to illuminate the space.

He couldn't hide from them indefinitely. Bluestreak was sobbing now, and he didn't have the time to try and quiet the sparkling. Prowl took the blaster Jazz had given him out of subspace and powered it on, clicking off the safety. It would pierce the armor of the flier, who was lightly built, but he'd have to get close to have a chance of penetrating the tank's armor.

Crouching behind a statue of a looming spark-eater, Prowl watched the biolights of the two Decepticons grow closer. His repaired leg

ached, and he'd probably broken something in it with his hasty dash. The throb of pain matched the beat of his spark. Something to worry about later.

His processor was using the data from his wings to map the space, counting down the exact micrometer of the distance between him and his two adversaries as they closed the distance. He had to wait. Let them get closer. They didn't know he was armed, not yet. They still thought he was a scared carrier.

"Can't hide forever," The tank rumbled. "Come out, and maybe we're spare your sparkling."

Prowl's grip on the blaster tightened. Closer. Closer.

Finally, they were close enough. His tactical computer told him he had a 87.6% chance of penetrating the tank's armor at this distance. Prowl stood and leveled his blaster at the red glow of the tank's optics. He squeezed the trigger, and the tank's helm exploded in a shower of energon.

The flier immediately jumped, bringing his gun to bear on Prowl's location. Not fast enough. Prowl's next shot pierced his canopy and went through his spark chamber. He was grey before he hit the ground.

Relief spread through Prowl's systems like coolant, his busted leg shaking. Backing up to a wall, Prowl coaxed Bluestreak back over his shoulder and into his arms. Tears poured down the sparkling's fat cheeks, and he clutched his carrier's chest plate.

"I'm sorry, Bluestreak. I'm sorry." Prowl whispered, rocking him. How did he soothe an upset sparkling? How did Jazz normally calm Bluestreak down when he took fright?

Voice a shakey whisper, Prowl began to sing the lullabye that Jazz always crooned to Bluestreak. It was flat and tuneless, but Bluestreak didn't seem to mind. Slowly, the tears stopped and the sparkling fell into an exhausted recharge.

Holding him close, Prowl kept his sensors primed and prayed that help would come soon.

Chapter 14

It ate at Jazz to leave Prowl and Bluestreak behind. He wanted nothing more than to stand guard over the two, and defend them with his spark. But there were hundreds of other mechanisms in the park, and they were at the mercy of the Decepticons. Jazz wouldn't be able to call himself an Autobot if he didn't at least try to help.

Prowl could handle his own, Jazz reminded himself. The Praxian had been an Enforcer, and Jazz knew he was a fierce hand-to-hand fighter. Jazz had no doubt he was a crack shot as well. He'd stay hidden, keep quiet, and if he was found, he would fight like a pit-demon.

He had to put thoughts of Prowl and Bluestreak out of his processor. A distraction could cost him his life.

Jazz activated his stealth paint and silenced his systems, creeping through the park as best as he could. It was the middle of the day, and the park had broad, open spaces with long sightlines. Not exactly the best environment for sneaking. He would just have to do the best he can.

The Decepticons seemed to be herding everyone to the center of the park, gathering them all around the ornate fountain that was the centerpiece of Six Lasers. Jazz crouched at the top of a nearby rollercoaster, which gave him a commanding view of the area. It looked like there were about 10 Decepticons, all with blasters in hand. Likely there were also teams of two guarding the park's four entrances, and probably a few more scattered about searching the park. 20 was probably a good guesstimate. And only one him.

If he went in guns blazing, he was likely to get either himself or the hostages killed. He'd have to be smart about this.

A pair of Cons shoved a few more mecha onto the central plaza, forcing them roughly to the ground to sit with the other hostages. Then, they peeled off to go search the park again. Perfect.

Jazz followed the pair like a shadow, keeping to the tops or undersides of rides. He wanted to get far enough way from the main plaza that the other cons wouldn't hear. The advantage of the type of comm jammer that they were using is that it was indiscriminate. Sure,

the hostages couldn't contact anyone, but the Cons couldn't communicate either.

He wasn't going to give either of them a chance to fight. Blaster fire would be too loud, so Jazz pulled out his favorite knives. They tucked nicely under his forearm plates and were wicked sharp. They also threw well.

A knife straight to the vocalizer silenced the two Cons before they could make a sound. Startled, the two dropped their guns to pull the weapons from their throats. Energon sprayed. Jazz was quick to recover his knives. The next sheath they found was the Cons' spark chambers.

Dragging the two grey frames under the supports of a nearby ride, Jazz shook the energon from his knives and resumed his hunt.

Next, Jazz headed for the south entrance to the park. He needed to take out the guards preventing anyone from escaping from the park, or from entering to help.

Fortunately, it seemed they had picked the dimmest Cons to guard the gates. The two at the South Gate were standing with guns at their sides, trading dumb jokes and barely paying attention to their surroundings. Probably thought a park full of nobles and sparklings wouldn't put up much of a fight.

They never even saw Jazz. The two let out twin grunts of surprise as Jazz's knives were buried into their backs, slipping between plates to penetrate their spark chambers from behind. Then their sparks dispersed and they didn't know anything at all.

As Jazz circled around to the West Gate, one of the guards managed to yell out "Autobot!" and dodged even as his buddy hit the ground. With his knife now buried in the con's shoulder, Jazz instead lunged for the fallen guard's weapon and fired. So much for doing this silently.

Jazz checked in on the central plaza again. Fortunately, it didn't seem like any Decepticon Bigwigs were there. Just a bunch of no-name mooks. The one in charge had clearly heard the blaster fire and sent two of his minions towards the sound. Hmm, perhaps Jazz could work this to his advantage.

Unfortunately, alert and wary Decepticons were harder to take out than lazy, unobservant ones. As Jazz wrestled one to the ground, he

heard the sound of blaster fire from elsewhere in the park. In the direction of where he had left Prowl and Bluestreak.

The moment's distraction cost him. Jazz snarled and struggled as he was pinned by the larger Con.

"How's it feel, Autobot?" The Con grinned. "Taken out by a 'low life thug'?"

"Ain't over yet, Con." It was a bit early to be pulling out all the stops, but Jazz couldn't let it end here. He opened the speaker array on his hips and cranked out his favorite tune at strut-shaking maximum volume.

The Con howled as his audials bled under the onslaught. All around, glass littered the ground as the lightbulbs decorating the rides shattered. Jazz shoved the Con off of him, and fired his stolen blaster straight into the mech's spark chamber.

More Decepticons would be converging on his location soon. Jazz had made enough noise to be heard across half of Iacon. He needed to move. And more importantly, he needed to check on Prowl.

Transforming, Jazz tore across the park until he reached the location where he had left Prowl and Bluestreak. Except, they weren't there. Something had clearly forced them to move.

Where could they have gone? Jazz hadn't seen either of them on the Central Plaza with the rest of the hostages. If they had been found by Cons-

Jazz turned and started walking from the slides towards the center of the park. If Prowl had been discovered, they would have probably herded him this way.

The glow of energon led him to one of the dark and silent rides. It was nearly pitch black inside, save for the pink glow of recently spilled mecblood. Jazz flipped his visor into night mode, and could see two offline frames sprawled on the ground. His spark lept into his throat, but neither of them were his missing Praxians.

"Prowl?" Jazz hissed, not wanting to get shot by a wary Praxian if they were hiding out.

"Jazz?"

Thank Primus. Jazz fell to his knees in relief when Prowl poked his head out from behind a statue of a looming sparkeater, Bluestreak safe in his arms.

“I heard Blaster shots, I thought-“ Well, he had thought the worst.

“We are fine. I have re-broken my leg, but otherwise we are uninjured.” Prowl didn’t waste any time on chit chat. “What’s the situation?”

“Round about 20 Decepticons on scene.” Jazz reported. “I’ve taken out 8, and with the two here, I figure we’ve gotten about half their forces. None of the Big-wigs are here, probably they thought the park would be an easy target, with plenty of hostages to prevent Autobot retaliation.”

“Or-“ Prowl’s optics narrowed. “That’s exactly what they want.”

Jazz didn’t follow. “What do you mean?”

“A small group of low-ranking Decepticons attack a park in the middle of Iacon, an Autobot stronghold. To what end? What do they mean to gain?” Prowl’s optics flickered a bit as he spoke. “Unless Megatron doesn’t intend for them to ‘win.’ This attack is meant to upset the Iaconian public. It is a show of strength, that they can infiltrate even Iacon, and to make the public fear going out. Then, when the Autobots arrive to the ‘rescue’, they will slaughter the hostages and shake the public’s trust in the army. Any klik now, I imagine they will-“

Both mecha were distracted when there was a crackle and their commsuits flared back to life. Followed by a broadcast on the general channel.

Attention Iacon. This is the Decepticon forces. We have taken over your beloved theme park, and taken hostage the decadent nobles who waste Cybertron’s energy on their frivolous pursuits. We will not be silenced! You are being Decieved. By the Senate, by the Upper Class, and by the Primacy. Autobots, try to rescue them if you dare-

“You must tell the Prime not to respond.” Prowl looked at Jazz urgently. “He must not bring forces to the park. They will kill everyone if they do.”

Jazz was already contacting Optimus. “Then what do we do?”

“This will call for stealth, not force. You are a member of the Special Operations department, are you not?”

Jazz shot a startled look at Prowl. “How-?”

“You have a subspace mod for hiding weaponry.” Prowl explained. “You have a stealth paint mod for evading detection, and you are talented at moving silently.”

Well slag. The Praxian had him dead to rights. “Alright you got me. I-“ Jazz cut himself off when Optimus answered his comm call.

::Jazz? I take it you heard about the situation at Six Lasers?::

::In the middle of it, bossbot. We were at the park for Bluestreak’s first vorn creation day:: Poor kid would need extra presents to make up for this mess.

::You’re there with Bluestreak?:: Optimus exclaimed. ::Jazz! Okay, I’m sending everyone to the park right now to-::

::No! You can’t send everyone in guns blazing:: Jazz said firmly. ::Let me and my team handle this::

::What? Jazz! There are sparklings and innocents in there. We have to make a rescue attempt::

::If you show up with an army, the ‘Cons will kill everyone:: Jazz begged. ::Trust me, Optimus. Let my team do this::

:: .. Alright, Jazz. But keep me posted, I won’t hesitate to send the troops in if anything happens::

::We can do this. I’ll comm you if I need you:: Jazz promised. Then he ended the call and dialed up some of his agents.

Mirage and Hound, with their stealth capabilities, were top of the list. Along with Trailbreaker who, though not a member of Special Operations, could come in handy with his force fields. Jazz was so caught up in the task, he didn’t notice the figure creeping up on him until Prowl yelled.

“Jazz, look out!”

Something slammed into the side of Jazz’s helm, cracking his visor and sending him sprawling. Through the resulting double-vision, he saw the hazy shape of a large Decepticon looming over them.

“Well, well. A little Autobot and his whore.” The ‘Con grabbed Prowl by a wrist and lifted him up. “Oh, and carrying too.” He reached a hand towards Prowl’s belly.

It never made contact. Prowl snarled and swiped with his free hand at the Con’s face, raking his claws across the bigger mech’s optics. The Con howled, but didn’t let go. Instead, his fist clenched down and an ugly cracking sound came from Prowl’s wrist.

“You *glitch*.” Energon ran down the Con’s face from the deep scratches.

“Get away from my sparklings!” Prowl lunged again, sinking his fangs into the Con’s throat. Jerking his head, Prowl tore out the bigger mech’s primary energon line. Glowing mecblood sprayed, splattering across the dark walls of the fair ride, and the Con collapsed. Quickly his frame went grey.

Prowl tottered on his pedes for a moment, spitting out his mouthful of protoform and cabling with disgust. Then, his bad leg collapsed under him and he fell down heavily onto his side.

“Prowl!” Jazz staggered to his pedes and rushed over.

“I’m okay.” Prowl was venting heavily, one hand going to cover his belly. The other hung uselessly at his side.

“Ri ri!” Bluestreak bawled, having been woken by the commotion. He tottered over to his carrier’s side and threw himself onto Prowl’s thighs, heedless of the energon covering him.

“It’s okay, bitty.” Prowl ran his fingers soothingly up and down the sparkling’s back. “But we need to move. That con’s patrol partner must be nearby. Quickly.”

“Prowl, you can’t even stand.” Still, Jazz scooped up Bluestreak before helping Prowl back upright.

“I can move. If I need to.” Stubbornly, Prowl leaned hard on Jazz and limped deeper into the ride. A few twists and turns, and they emerged through a back access door.

Behind them, Jazz heard the sound of movement. The Con’s patrol partner had found his frame. They did need to move.

The nearest shelter was a game kiosk, it’s pile of plushie prizes hastily

abandoned by the park employee. They made decent cover when you burrowed under them, their colorful forms obscuring their frames and the soft plush muffling the quiet whirr of their systems.

Jazz gently rocked Bluestreak side to side, praying that the sparkling would keep silent as he listened to the Decepticon move around outside. Prowl had silenced his ventilations and his systems became so quiet they were hardly audible. He sat there, stock still, not even his wings twitching.

Finally, the Decepticon wandered away, and the two could relax slightly.

“Now then.” Prowl said in a soft whisper. “Here’s my plan.”

Mirage, Hound, and Trailbreaker had made it into the park undetected. Jazz put into action phase one of the plan: get Trailbreaker to the hostages so that his force field could be used to protect them.

A large Decepticon marched Trailbreaker into the central plaza, brandishing his large gun threateningly. The same Decepticon that Prowl had torn the throat out of. Jazz had studied the mech long enough to send Hound the schematics to make an accurate replica.

The lead Decepticon noticed them approaching and nodded in something like approval. “Found another, huh? Well, put him with the rest. The Autobots should be showing up soon, then the real show will begin.”

The hologram nodded and gave Trailbreaker a shove. The stocky black mech stumbled forward and fell to his knees among the other hostages.

“Now go see if you can find the others. Slaggers aren’t answering their comms.” The head ‘Con ordered, turning back away. The hologram shambled off, before vanishing behind a ride.

Phase one, complete. Phase two- lure the Decepticons far enough away from the hostages for Trailbreaker to active his force field while excluding them. This would be the hard part.

Jazz walked out from behind a fuel kiosk and into full view of the Central Plaza. “Hey, Decepticreeps!”

Immediately, he had five blasters aimed at him. Just a little intimidating.

“Well, then. A little Autobot.” Fortunately, the head Decepticon seemed to want to talk. “Just one of you?”

“One’s all we need.” Jazz put some bravado into his voice. “I can take you all down on my own.”

The Decepticons laughed.

“One little grounder?” A flier sneered. “Guess the Prime doesn’t care about all these rich slagers after all.”

“On the contrary.” Optimus Prime stepped out beside Jazz. “I care very much.”

“Prime!” The Decepticons exclaimed. They stared at their enemy number one hungrily.

“Let the hostages go!” Prime demanded. “You may take me instead of them.”

“Or. We could take both of you.” The head Decepticon nodded to his minions. “Grab them.”

The other Decepticons stepped forward, chuckling eagerly.

“What, gonna let them have the glory of bringing in the Prime?” Jazz yelled mockingly. “Not gonna brag to ol’ Megs that you were the one to cuff the Prime yourself?”

The head Decepticon hummed thoughtfully. “Maybe you’re right.” He stepped forwards, towards Optimus and Jazz, and away from the hostages.

Suddenly, a golden dome flickered into existence, covering the central fountain and all the hostages huddled around it.

At the same time, the image of Optimus vanished.

“What the-?” The Decepticons whirled around, obviously confused as to what was going on. Then, a blade emerged from the leader’s spark chamber and he fell to the ground, grey.

“What just happened?” The four low-rank Cons raised their guns and looked around for the invisible threat.

Jazz threw himself eagerly into the fray, knives appearing in his hands and finding their marks in Decepticon protoform. Hound appeared as well, in the form of multiple holograms that rushed the scene and only increased the confusion.

When all was said and done, five Decepticons lay cold and grey on the ground. Jazz sent his agents to the two gates he hadn't hit earlier to capture the Decepticons presumably still guarding them, then called in the real Optimus Prime and the clean up crew.

Ratchet was one of the first on the scene as soon as it had been cleared of threats. Fortunately, the only real injuries in the hostages were some scuffs and dents. A few had some blaster damage, but nothing so severe that other medics couldn't take care of them. So Jazz hustled Ratchet straight to where Prowl and Bluestreak were hidden.

"Primus." Ratchet knelt down next to Prowl, scanning the Praxian with a deep frown on your face. "You certainly did mess yourself up."

"I didn't have much choice." Prowl stretched out his broken leg and winced only slightly when Ratchet manipulated his pede. Bluestreak was mag'd to his chest, shivering with his face buried against his carrier's plating. "My newspark?"

"Fine. Probably a little quiet from all the upset, but her frame is intact and her spark is strong." Ratchet reassured him. "She's in much better shape than you."

"Decepticons are not known for their gentleness." Prowl kept his good hand across Bluestreak's back, watching as Ratchet ran hands over his lower leg.

"Yeah, yeah." Ratchet tutted, "Well, it's a clean break, right across the weld. I can re-weld it, but its probably not going to heal until after you give emergence."

Prowl grumbled, clearly not happy about the prospect of going back to berth-rest.

"Crushed wrist, too?" Ratchet held out a hand until Prowl set his damaged hand into it. "Alright. I'm going to take you to Iacon General for surgery. Your hand I can get fixed up, we'll see what I can do for your leg."

Ratchet transformed and opened up his back so that Prowl could be loaded in. Then he headed out for Iacon General, lights and sirens coming on after he passed the blocked the Autobots had set up around Six Lasers. Traffic parted in front of him, and Jazz hugged his aft all the way to the hospital.

The hardest part about getting Prowl into surgery was getting Bluestreak off of him. The sparkling really didn't want to let go of his carrier. Jazz could hardly blame him. The sparkling had been through a pit of a day. Finally, they decided to leave him until he fell into recharge and could finally be pried from Prowl's plating.

"I'll take good care of him." Jazz promised, cradling Bluestreak in his arms as Prowl was put into stasis.

Jazz moved out into the waiting room, keeping an audial on the Autobot chatter channels as the mess at Six Lasers was cleaned up. He couldn't quite sit still, leg jiggling up and down in time to the canned music playing over the speakers in the waiting room. He could keep it cool and calm while on a mission, but once the action was over, he had a horrible time calming back down.

Eventually, Jazz gave up on sitting and settled for pacing the waiting room, dancing as best he could without disturbing Bluestreak in his arms.

That was how Optimus found him, about a joor later.

"How are you, Jazz?" The big mech asked softly.

"Better." Jazz stopped his dancing, settling for tapping his pedes idly. "Can't say this was a good day."

"I'm sure it was very hard." Optimus agreed. "But all the Decepticons are either dead or in custody, and none of the hostages received more than superficial wounds. That's quite the impressive feat."

"It was Prowl." Jazz nodded a head towards the surgery room. "He figured it out."

"Prowl? Figured what out?"

"The 'Cons wanted the Autobots to show up guns a'blazin. Then, they would shoot all the hostages and sacrifice themselves to shake Iaconian faith in the army." Jazz explained what Prowl had discovered earlier. "Then he came up with a plan to save everybody."

“Did he?” Optimus looked over at the door, behind which Prowl was being put back together. “That’s very impressive.”

“He also killed three Decepticons single-handedly, while protecting Bluestreak.” Jazz could still hardly believe it. “Shot two, and ripped out the throat of a third with his denta.”

“And he and Bluestreak and his newspark are all okay?” Optimus asked with worry.

“Blue’s a little traumatized, but he isn’t physically damaged.” The sparkling whimpered in Jazz’s arms, and he cradled Bluestreak to his spark until he settled again. “Prowl re-broke his leg, and got his wrist crushed, but otherwise he and the bit are alright. Fraggin’ miracle.”

“Yes. He is a very impressive mech.”

“We need him, Optimus.” Jazz knew that Prowl had a powerful processor, but this was the first time he’d seen it first hand. “He’s fraggin’ brilliant. Takes even the smallest clues and puts it all together and figures out how to make it work. I think he could really make a difference in this war.”

“I will not put a carrying mech to work.” Optimus said firmly. “Especially not one damaged and still recovering from a major trauma. He needs to bond with his sparklings. I will not take that from him.”

“Can I at least bring home some info, get his opinion on things?” Jazz asked.

“As long as you do not cause him stress or distract him from his creations.” Optimus chuckled. “Though I am sure that Ratchet has already made threats over what he will do to you if you stress him out.”

“Vividly.” Jazz had been threatened with reformat into a variety of home appliances. “But I think getting a little more data will help him out. That’s a mech that doesn’t sit in the dark well.”

“Then you have my permission, as long as you do not bring him anything classified or sensitive.”

“Alright, boss bot.”

Prowl was discharged a few joors later. He had a brace on his wrist, which Ratchet said he would remove after a few decacycles once the joint had finished knitting back together. He also had a large, exterior brace on his leg. Apparently, his strut wouldn't heal enough to continue supporting his weight until his repair systems had returned to normal operation, so the outside brace would take the strain off his strut while still allowing him to walk.

Well, it was more of a determined hobble, but Jazz was sure that Prowl would be glad not to need assistance with walking again.

That evening, Bluestreak wouldn't settle down without the both of them in the berth with him. The poor little guy had been through so much, him and his carrier both. Prowl, still with painkillers circulating in his system, was quick to drift off once his helm hit the pillow. Bluestreak was curled up under his bumper, Prowl's good hand covering him.

Jazz looked at the Praxian's handsome face in the dim moonlight filtering in from the room's window. The soft blue light highlighted the sharp edge of his chevron, his narrow nose, and the shining white curve of his helm. Primus, what an incredible mech. Jazz realized he might be falling for him, and falling hard.

Chapter 15

It was no surprise that Bluestreak was exceptionally clingy over the next few decacycles. The poor bit had only just gotten over his separation anxiety, only to have another trauma send him spiraling again. He clung to either Prowl or Jazz, whoever was available, and had to be coaxed into fueling and playing again. While neither adult minded indulging him, it did make it hard to find time and space for . . . certain activities.

Prowl carefully took a step away from Bluestreak's crib, then another. The sparkling didn't stir, remaining fast in recharge. Turning away, Prowl's wings drooped in relief and he gave a soft sigh. "It seems he will be down for awhile." He whispered.

"Good, good." Jazz was leaning against the doorframe of the nursery. He turned to the side to allow Prowl to pass him. "Poor little guy has had it rough the last couple decacycles."

"Yes. I worry for him." Prowl carefully shut the door behind him. "He has had to endure so much."

"Hey, he's a strong sparkling." Jazz placed a reassuring hand on Prowl's shoulder. "He'll pull through this, we just have to give him time."

"I certainly hope so." Prowl looked at Jazz and his wings perked a little. "Speaking of having time, would you be willing to make a donation while we have a few moments to ourselves?"

Jazz chuckled. "Straight to the point, huh? Yeah, I always got time for you."

Following Prowl into his berthroom, Jazz watched the Praxian move with a critical optic. He seemed fully healed from the debacle at the theme park, though the brace on his leg meant that he walked stiffly and with a pronounced limp. The brace on his wrist had been removed, at least. Despite his damaged leg, Prowl was looking much healthier than he had when Jazz first met him. Carrying mecha were meant to have a kind of "glow" about them, and Prowl was definitely starting to develop that.

As he usually did, Prowl lay down on the berth and settled himself against the copious pillows before spreading his legs. He did it in a way that seemed so clinical and detached, though he had reassured Jazz several times that he did, in fact, enjoy their couplings.

Settling between Prowl's legs, Jazz gently stroked a hand up the Praxian's thigh. He was warm, and the protoform was soft beneath his digits. He was almost to a healthy weight, and it was encouraging to see.

Prowl hummed and spread his legs a little further, inviting Jazz to continue his exploration. But then he winced, and Jazz immediately halted. "Something wrong?"

"No, nothing is wrong." Prowl settled a hand on his belly, rubbing the protoform there softly. "She is moving now, and she just settled in an uncomfortable position."

"You can feel her moving?" Jazz grinned. "Prowl, that's great!"

"It is an encouraging sign." Prowl agreed. "If distracting at times."

Jazz watched as his fingers drummed lightly on the surface of his abdomen. The sparkling wasn't big enough for the movement to be visible, but she could probably be felt. Jazz reached a hand forward, but stopped before he actually touched. "May I?"

Prowl seemed confused by the request, and it took him a moment to realize what Jazz was asking. "Oh, yes. You may." He rubbed at a place low on his side. "She is most active right here."

Carefully, Jazz laid his hand on Prowl's belly. Under the taut protoform, he could feel the gentle vibration of the newspark moving around. She was tiny, but felt strong. She had persevered through so much, just like her carrier.

"Wow." Jazz couldn't keep in a sappy smile. "Wow, Prowl, that's so incredible."

"I am very pleased." A soft look came over Prowl's face as he looked down at his abdomen. "Even if I fear that she will be interrupting my recharge soon enough."

"And you'll love her for it." Jazz rubbed his thumb against the Praxian's belly, excited to feel the new life growing within Prowl even if she was not his.

“Yes, I will.” Prowl fell silent, but did not ask Jazz to stop.

“She’s strong, like her carrier.”

Prowl dipped his helm and looked away. Did he not think that he was strong? Because, in Jazz’s opinion, Prowl was the strongest mech he knew.

Though Jazz had seen carrying mecha before, he had never been so close as to touch. Prowl’s protoform was so soft, and stripes of fresh sentio metallico crossed over his abdomen as a sign of how quickly he was growing. Jazz pressed lightly, watching the way his fingers sunk in slightly before reaching the firmer mass of the gestation chamber beneath. Prowl could use a bit more cushion over his gestation chamber, but Jazz could help with that.

Speaking of which, Jazz still had a job to do. He moved his hand lower, circling Prowl’s modesty plating until it clicked open to reveal the Praxian’s valve. It was already warm and plump, reassurance that Prowl did actually enjoy what they were doing.

He was so quiet when they interfaced, making only the occasional gasp or soft moan. And much of the time, he muffled himself when he *did* make a noise. Jazz was curious what he needed to do to get Prowl to get loud, but that was something to discover later. If there was a later. If this arrangement didn’t end once Prowl had his sparkling.

Jazz put that out of his processor and shifted to lap at Prowl’s sweet valve. Carrying mecha produced thicker lubricant, and more of it, and Jazz wondered if this is why Prowl tasted so good, or if he was just naturally sweet.

Prowl sighed and pressed his helm back into the pillows, one hand coming down to grip one of Jazz’s audial horns. The other stayed on his belly, rubbing the gentle curve as his thighs shook around Jazz’s helm.

Reaching around Prowl’s hips, Jazz dug his fingers into the soft protoform of the Praxian’s aft. He was getting more bulk here too, and would likely have an amazing aft once he finished filling back out. Jazz couldn’t wait to see it.

The first overload into Jazz’s mouth left Prowl panting and limp, fans whirring loudly to try and cool his overheating frame. There was no resistance as Jazz slid his spike into that hot, wet valve and began to thrust. Though the entire point of this was just to donate transfluid to

Prowl's frame, Jazz wanted to make sure that he felt nothing but bliss. Prowl deserved it.

Prowl tended to get knocked into recharge by his final overload, and this time was no different. He barely even shifted as Jazz cleaned him up and removed the soiled bedding.

He did shift, however, when a muffled cry came from outside the room. Prowl groaned and rolled onto his side, drawn to his sparkling even in recharge.

"Shh, shh." Jazz rubbed Prowl's shoulder before climbing out of the berth. "It's alright, I'll grab him."

Both Bluestreak and Prowl settled again once they were cuddled up close to each other. Jazz slid under the covers and joined them, Bluestreak curled up nice and safe between the two adult's frames. All was well again.

As Jazz cooked breakfast, with one audial on Bluestreak in his playpen and the other on the snoozing Prowl in the berthroom, he thought. He wanted Prowl to stay, forever if possible. Not just because of Bluestreak, but because Jazz was fond of the adult Praxian as well. No, more than fond. Dare he say it, Jazz thought he might be in love.

It was a bit of a scary thought. Though Jazz loved freely, and had taken lovers before, he'd never really been *in love*. He'd never gone weak at the knees when another mech smiled, and his spark soared whenever Prowl let out one of his rare laughs. He wanted to cuddle Prowl forever, to kiss him and show him all the affection he deserved. But more than that, Jazz wanted to woo Prowl. Show him that he was loved.

How did he court a mech that had never known a consensual relationship? Who had been used and abused his entire existence? The last thing he wanted was to scare Prowl off, or make him think Jazz was just like all the other mecha in his past.

A soft noise drew Jazz's attention, and he looked over to see Prowl leaning on the doorframe to the berthroom.

"Good morning." Jazz said with a smile. "Breakfast is almost ready."

"Ah, thank you." Now that he was mobile again, Prowl no longer

needed assistance to get around. He was able to go over to the playpen and lift Bluestreak out, then made his way into the kitchen. "What are you making?"

"Flapjacks." Jazz flipped one of the flat energon cakes. "And I got some mercury sauce to go over them."

"I see." Prowl came over to watch curiously. "I would still like to learn how to cook, if you are amenable."

"Of course!" Jazz would be more than happy. Anything to spend more time with his favorite mech. "I'm just about done with these, but how about you give me a hand with lunch?"

"I would appreciate that." Prowl went to buckle Bluestreak into his high chair, then took a seat next to him as Jazz served up their fuel.

As always, Prowl got a heaping helping while Bluestreak got some mashed up cakes with generous sauce. Prowl started in on his fuel, while Jazz nibbled on his own in between convincing Bluestreak to take spoonfuls. After a bit, though, he noticed Prowl was watching him more than he was eating.

"May I try?" Prowl asked, putting down his fork.

"Of course!" Jazz would never deny the carrier a chance to look after his own sparkling. He handed Prowl the spoon. "He's a bit resistant at first, but he'll get more eager once he realizes he likes the taste."

"I see." Prowl scooped up a spoonful of mush and brought it to Bluestreak's mouth. He didn't make the exaggerated flightframe noises that Jazz did, but his voice was soft as he cajoled the sparkling to open his mouth. "Come now, Bluestreak. Yummy fuel. I know you must be hungry. You will like this, I promise."

Jazz watched as Prowl successfully slipped in a spoonful and went back for more. It was a little odd, but he felt immeasurably proud watching the intimate moment. For someone who had confessed he "love his sparkling, but didn't know how to care for him" Prowl was making incredible progress.

Once finished with breakfast, they moved to the couch for cartoons and some cuddling. Now that Prowl's middle was getting bigger, and especially now that the newspark was moving around, Bluestreak had become fascinated with his carrier's belly. He sat in Prowl's lap, hands on his carrier's swollen abdomen, drumming his hands on the taut

protoform and giggling when he got little kicks in response. Prowl had an indulgent smile on his face as he watching, tolerating the abuse of his insides with good humor.

It was sweet and domestic and not a scene Jazz thought he would ever have the privilege of watching. He pressed close to Prowl's side, laughing along with Bluestreak, and wished things could stay like this forever.

That settled in. In the new cycle, he would start seriously brainstorming how he was going to woo Prowl. Because now that he had this, he never wanted to let it go. Jazz never thought his life would take this turn, but he was willing to put in the work to keep Prowl and Bluestreak in his life.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Happy New Year!

Now that Prowl was mobile again, it meant that he was able to look after Bluestreak while Jazz had to run to headquarters on business. He still wasn't going back to full-time, because apparently Bluestreak got upset when he was gone. Not as badly as he had before, when left with Smokescreen, but it was clear the sparkling preferred to have both of his caretakers at his side.

But the war didn't stop from the whims of a sparkling, and Jazz had a job to do. Take reports from his agents, encode new orders for those currently on a mission, and analyze new data. Mirage, his second in command, was handling the cycle-to-cycle but Jazz still had to give final approval.

Once he was finished with his duties, Jazz decided to walk through Iacon instead of driving back to his habsuite. He was still trying to think of what he could get Prowl. The Praxian had nothing except what had been in his subspace during the attack on Praxus. (A Praxian Acid-Rifle, some empty ration cubes, and a pair of stasis cuffs, all since returned to him.) Everything else in the habsuite belonged to Jazz, though he was happy to share.

Prowl had not complained, however. He never once asked for anything of his own, and Jazz had gotten the impression that he had lived a rather austere life back in Praxus as well. Jazz could get him sparkling things, sure, but that would be for the *newspark*, not for Prowl.

As he wandered past a sweets shop, Jazz paused. Prowl had seemed to like the treats he'd had at the amusement park, and had revealed he'd never had any form of sweets or candy before. Maybe he'd like some. Carriers were supposed to enjoy sweets, right?

Heading inside, Jazz took a look around the wide array of candies on display. With no idea what Prowl would like best, he went for a sampler pack of the shop's more popular options. If Prowl found one he really liked, Jazz could always go back and buy more. He also

made certain to pick up a small box of Bluestreak's favorites, as an apology for being gone for so long.

"Jasz!" Bluestreak cried as he walked in through the door. The sparkling got to his pedes and toddled over to Jazz as best he could, throwing his chubby arms around Jazz's leg.

"Hey, Blue." Jazz reached down to rub the sparkling's helm, and awkwardly stumped over to the couch with Bluestreak still clinging to his leg.

"Hello, Jazz." Prowl looked up from where he was nestled in a blanket on the couch, a little smile on his face. "Everything go well?"

"Yeah, things are alright at Headquarters." Nothing Jazz couldn't handle, at least. He sat down on the couch next to Prowl, prompting Bluestreak to clamber up into his lap. "How was he?"

"He cried for awhile when you left and didn't want to go down for a nap, but he perked up once he woke back up." Prowl recounted.

"Great." Jazz really hoped they could get Bluestreak over his separation anxiety. "Got a lil' something for you."

"Oh?" Prowl looked at him curiously.

Jazz produced the variety box he had purchased and handed it to Prowl. "Here. I wasn't sure what you'd like, so I got a sampling of everything."

Prowl opened the box and examined the assortment of sweets inside. He delicately picked up a glowing little cube with a shimmering mercury filling and gold flakes decorating the top. "Are these in keeping with my dietary plan?"

"They won't hurt you." Jazz said with a chuckle. "Long as you get everything you need in your regular meals, the sweets are just a bonus."

"Hmm." Prowl squinted suspiciously at the treat, before popping it into his mouth. As he bit down, his optics brightened.

"Good?" Jazz thought he might like that.

"Mmhmm." Prowl took out another, this one dusted with iron, and tried it as well.

“Well, let me know if you like any of them more than the others. I’ll be happy to buy you as much as you want.” Jazz offered.

“You don’t really need to-“ Prowl protested.

“Please. I want to.” Jazz laid a hand over his. “You’ve been through the Pit, let me do something nice for you.”

“You have already done so much-“ Prowl was interrupted when Bluestreak grabbed his hand and tugged, obviously wanting some of the sweets for himself.

Jazz chuckled. “Don’t worry, bitlet, got some for you too.” He produced the other, smaller box he had purchased and handed it over.

Bluestreak struggled with the box for a moment, before finally ripping the top off and promptly upending the entire box over himself. He blinked in surprise, before picking up one of the sweets and stuffing it into his mouth.

Prowl laughed. And not just one of his faint, barely-there scoffs, a full on, frame shaking laugh. His optics squeezed shut and a few tears leaked out as Bluestreak looked up at him in faint confusion. Jazz couldn’t stop grinning.

As he often did, Bluestreak turned a simple matter of refueling into a messy experience. The couch, fortunately, would recover. And so would the sparkling, after a good bath.

Prowl sat in the tub with Bluestreak in his lap, carefully scrubbing the sparkling’s delicate wings. Jazz was perched on the edge of the tub, washing Prowl’s wings with the same level of care. Not that Prowl needed a bath, but it had become clear to Jazz that the act of communal washing was soothing to the Praxian. No doubt, it was one more level of bonding that had previously been denied him.

Actually, that gave Jazz an idea. Maybe Prowl would enjoy a spa day. Jazz certainly would, it would give him an excuse to get hands all over that pretty frame. And Prowl certainly deserved some serious relaxation. Jazz made a note to look into booking them an appointment.

Between the two of them, they managed to get Bluestreak to berth. It was a sign of Prowl's recovery that he was able to stay up for a little while afterwards, instead of going to berth early.

"I picked up a little something more for you while I was out." Jazz commented as they returned to the couch.

"More candy?" Prowl questioned, a little hopefully.

"Not quite." Jazz handed over a secure datapad. "I've got some battle situations here. I was hoping you'd analyze them and give me a few different plans. One for decisive victory, and one for the victory with the least number of casualties, for each side."

Now Prowl seemed *very* interested. His wings perked up, and his EM field flared with curiosity. He held out a hand, and just refrained from snatching the datapad from Jazz's grasp. Turning it on, he sank happily back into the couch cushions and began to read.

Jazz had spent some time taking the records of old battles and scrubbing them of notable details. The anonymous accounts would make good training sims for the younger recruits. They would also be a good test for Prowl's abilities.

As he watched Prowl pour over the datapad, Jazz thought he'd only seen the Praxian so happy when he'd been reunited with Bluestreak. Obviously, this was a mech who really did love to work. If he ever met Ultra Magnus, the two would probably get along. Much to the dismay of the rest of the officers, Jazz was sure.

Prowl's wings wiggled as he read, dipping a little and raising again as he ran whatever analysis his big processor was running. One of his hands had settled over his belly, rubbing the gravid curve absentmindedly. It was an amusing contrast to the vicious battles Jazz knew he must be planning.

In seemingly no time at all, Prowl was handing the datapad back over with a new addition. Jazz read it over, optics going wide as he saw that Prowl had managed to come up with four plans that followed his parameters precisely. For each situation.

"You came up with all of that just now?" Jazz asked in disbelief. Sure, Ratchet had told him that Prowl had a powerful processor, but this was on another level. It would normally take a whole department at least a cycle for this kind of analysis, and that was with the assistance of a terminal.

“It is what I was designed for.” Prowl shrugged dismissively. “This kind of stationary analysis is simple for me. It is when the pieces start moving that things get difficult.”

Knowing Prowl, he was vastly understating his abilities. Jazz would have to find some way of getting Prowl current information. Unfortunately, though he was part of the Command staff, Jazz often wasn't privy to the latest in battle plans. The old generals who were in charge didn't have much trust in spies, and usually claimed that Special Ops didn't need to know the latest Autobot plans. They just needed to know what the Decepticons were doing. The thing about spies, though, was that it tended to be pretty hard to keep secrets from them. Jazz would get those plans, one way or another.

Prowl sighed and tipped his head back, before heaving himself off the couch and to his pedes.

“You alright?” Jazz stood to join him.

“Yes, fine.” Prowl reassured him, putting a hand on his lower back and stretching a little. “My back hurts and I am being kicked. I think I will pace for a bit. That used to settle Bluestreak down.”

Jazz had a sudden image of Prowl when he was an Enforcer, pacing the dark barracks alone as he carried with no support and no friends. “Want me to walk with you?”

“You do not need to-“ Prowl began to deny the company.

“I want to. In fact.” Jazz ducked into his spare room and re-emerged with a small cyber-violin. “How about a little musical accompaniment?”

“That would be nice.” Prowl stroked a hand over his belly, rubbing at the spot the newspark had found to abuse that evening. “I think she likes your music.”

“Oh? Do I have a little fan in there?” Jazz would be more than glad to play, then. He walked alongside Prowl as the Praxian limped around the living room, crooning out a tune soft and slow. He sang and played whatever came to mind, whatever he thought might prove soothing to creator and creation.

Kicking sparkling or not, though, Prowl was getting tired. His wings

drooped lower and lower, and his helm nodded. A brief stumble, which had Jazz grabbing his arm, meant it was time for berth. Prowl made no protest as he was led to the berthroom (that Jazz was now thinking of as ‘theirs’ instead of just ‘his’).

“Donation?” Prowl requested, even as he reclined on the berth and his optics drifted shut.

How could Jazz say no? “Alright, just relax and I’ll take care of you.”

His fingers, which had been dancing over the strings of his cyber-violin clicks before, now played Prowl’s frame instead. An instrument that sang just as sweet, in the form of soft little sighs and gasps. Jazz pumped his fingers in and out of Prowl’s valve, watching the Praxian bring up his hand to bite down on his finger as he often did.

Gently, Jazz reached up and tugged the finger from Prowl’s mouth. “Why d’ya do that?”

“Mm, what?” Prowl asked, hips shifting slightly with the movements of Jazz’s fingers.

“Muffle yourself.” Jazz elaborated. “Bite your finger.”

“Oh. I didn’t realize-“ Prowl fisted his hands into the sheets. “I will stop, if it pleases you.”

“No, no. Don’t worry about pleasing me.” Jazz had hoped they were beyond this. “Do whatever makes you feel good, babe. It doesn’t bother me, I was just curious.”

“Mm.” Though Prowl didn’t return his hand to his mouth, he still barely made a noise as he vented through his first overload.

If Prowl was a quiet partner, then he was a quiet partner. It was no dealbreaker. Jazz pressed himself into Prowl, covering the Praxian’s frame with his own as he fragged him soft and slow. He could feel the hot, wet air exhausting from all of Prowl’s vents, flowing over his frame and buffeting his sensors. Carrying the unique, sweet scent that was Prowl. His EM Field, normally held close to his plating, wound about Jazz’s with pleasure. That was worth a thousand screams.

Chapter 17

Jazz took the initiative and booked up a private room at the nearby bathhouse. Then he downloaded some books on pre-natal massage, and even took the time to ask Ratchet from advice. Finally, all he had to do was ask out Prowl. Sure, easy enough.

“So, Prowl.” Jazz asked casually as they sat on the couch one night. “Would you like to go out and do something?”

“Do something?” Prowl tilted his helm questioningly. “Like what?”

“Well, say I rented out a private room at the local bathhouse.” Jazz suggested, as if he hadn’t already done that. “We could go in, relax, enjoy some alone time.”

It was clear that the idea tempted Prowl. He was a mech who seemed to enjoy bathing. “What about Bluestreak?”

“I have a sitter that does pretty well with him.” The sparkling probably wouldn’t like having both Jazz and Prowl leave, but they couldn’t stick at his side every joor of the cycle. Smokescreen would be able to help him work through it, and hopefully Bluestreak would get used to being looked after by other mecha.

Prowl’s lips pursed as he considered it. He glanced down at his sparkling, who was happily smashing together some of his toys and laughing. “I- I’m not sure.”

“It’s hard for you to leave him.” Jazz observed sympathetically. He understood, it was difficult for him to let someone else watch Bluestreak too.

“When he emerged, I wasn’t even allowed to see him.” Prowl revealed, voice soft. “They removed him from the room immediately, then patched me up to return to work. I- I have never known such pain. Not physical, but the agony of being apart from him. I considered a lot of things in the decacycles after that, but I could feel him in my spark. I had to keep living for him.”

Jazz reached out to place a hand on Prowl’s shoulder, then pulled him into a gentle hug. “I’m sorry.”

“Every time I had to leave him with his caretakers, my spark broke a little more.” Prowl bowed his head to press his chevron to Jazz’s chest. “I never knew when they would decide he was stable enough to be permanently separated from me. Never knew which time seeing him would be my last.”

“It’s alright.” Jazz said soothingly, rubbing a hand up and down Prowl’s back. It suddenly occurred to him that the separation anxiety went both ways. “You can spend as much time as you want with him. He’s here, he’s safe, and he loves you.”

Prowl stayed there in Jazz’s arms for a few more kliks, taking the time to emotionally center himself. Then, he pulled away and settled back into the cushions of the couch. “I would like to go to the bathhouse.”

“You sure?” Jazz wouldn’t blame him if he said no.

“Yes. I think it sounds nice. And-“ Prowl looked back down at Bluestreak, who glanced up at his carrier and smiled. “I cannot have him at my side every klik. He will need to go to school soon, or to a daycare once I am working again.”

“I’ll make sure it’s a nice time.” Jazz promised. “I have us reserved two joors in a private room. Next decacycle.”

“I look forward to it.”

Smokescreen was, as always, happy to come watch Bluestreak. Jazz went to answer the knock on the door, and as he opened it to let the Praxian in, he suddenly realized that this would be the first time Prowl would see another member of his frametype since the Fall of Praxus.

Both Praxians paused in surprise when they caught sight of each other, Smokescreen in the doorway and Prowl on the couch. Bluestreak spotted the visitor as well, and toddled over with a squeal to hug his favorite sparkling-sitter’s leg. Smokescreen was the first to recover from the shock, bending down to scoop up Bluestreak before addressing Prowl.

“You must be Prowl, Bluestreak’s carrier.” Smokescreen canted his wings in greeting and stepped fully into the apartment.

“You are Praxian.” Prowl sat up a little straighter, wings rising. “Were

you- did you-?"

"I left Praxus for Iacon several vorn ago." Smokescreen answered the unasked question. "As far as I know, you and Bluestreak are the only survivors of the bombing."

"I see." Prowl's wings lowered again in an expression of grief, and Smokescreen's copied them. "Well, it is good to know there are a least one other of my frame-kin still in existence."

"There's a few others." Smokescreen informed him. "Not many, but there are a few other expats here in Iacon. We get together every other decacycle, to chat. Socialize. Reminisce. You and Bluestreak would be welcome if you ever wanted to attend."

"You would accept one of my caste?" Prowl looked up, something like hope in his optics.

"That doesn't matter now. We're all Praxian." Smokescreen bounced Bluestreak a little on his hip. "Give me your comm code, and I'll send you the details."

Prowl sent out a brief databurst containing his contact information, and Jazz hid a smile. He hadn't quite forseen this, but it would do Prowl some good to get out and socialize with other mecha.

"Now then. I've got this little scraplet under control." Smokescreen tickled Bluestreak, garnering a cascade of giggles. "You two go have some fun."

"Thanks, Smokey." Jazz went over and gave Prowl a hand getting up off the couch. "We'll be back in a couple of joor. Comm if anything comes up."

"Can do." Smokescreen gave him a little salute before wandering over to where Bluestreak had abandoned his toys.

With one last look at his sparkling, Prowl followed Jazz out the door.

Down on the street, Prowl and Jazz caught a public transport headed towards the Central Baths. It was fairly full, but upon seeing Prowl, a mech got up to give him his seat.

"Thank you." Prowl said softly as he sank down into the offered seat.

“Of course!” The other mech said. “How far along are you?”

“Almost to my fourth quartex.” Prowl’s hands laced together in his lap.

“Well, congratulations.”

Then the mech sitting next to Prowl looked over curiously. “Hey, you’re a Praxian, right?”

Prowl stiffened. “Yes, I am.”

“That was some nasty business, with Praxus and all. I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you.”

Fortunately, the mech seemed to realize that Prowl didn’t want to talk and left it there. Jazz could hear murmurs running through the transport, though, and knew that everyone was whispering about the Praxian in their midst.

Prowl let out a sigh as he got off the transport at their stop. “I had forgotten that I am now a member of an endangered frametype.”

“We’ve been trying to keep out of the news that there were two survivors of Praxus, just to keep the newshounds away from you and Blue, but I’m afraid just being Praxian is going to get you looks now.” Jazz said apologetically.

“Mecha will find out eventually, but I am glad not to be the focus of such attention.” Prowl looked up at the gilded exterior of the Iacon Central Baths. “It is very . . . large.”

Jazz chuckled. “Biggest bathhouse on Cybertron. Come on, I reserved us a private room.”

A bath attendant showed them to the room, then left them alone. It wasn’t the largest room in the bathhouse, but still featured a large shower, luxurious oil bath, and a massage table.

First stop was the shower, to rinse off any dust and grime that might have accumulated. Showerheads surrounded them on all sides, warm solvent pattering down onto their frames. Prowl let out a happy grumble and fluffed his armor, letting the solvent get down in between the plates. He wasn’t dirty, as he usually got into the bathtub

with Bluestreak for the sparkling's regular baths, but that didn't stop him from picking up a soapy sponge and running it over his frame.

"Get your back?" Jazz offered, picking up a soft bristle brush.

"Please." Prowl presented his back to him, open and trusting.

As he always did, Jazz took to the task of scrubbing the seams of the Praxian's wings with gentle care. Though they weren't so sensitive that a brush could hurt them, Jazz didn't want to be the cause of even the slightest discomfort. He worked the bristles over the sensor-laden panels, until they gleamed in the lighting of the shower.

Then Jazz worked his way down, around the hinges that attached wings to back and across the Praxian's broad backplate. Prowl's lightbar also required special attention, the thin transpara-steel covering an array of delicate LEDs. Jazz moved lower, getting underneath the thick bottom edge of Prowl's backplate and along the interlocking ridges of his spinal strut, before stopping. While he certainly wouldn't mind washing Prowl's aft, he didn't think they were quite there yet.

There was more he could do, though. "Want me to get your legs and pedes?" Because Prowl was now heavy enough that bending over that far was difficult.

"You do not have to-" Prowl began.

"I want to." Jazz assured him, before kneeling down to address the Praxian's shinguards. He worked his way over the complex angles and panels of one leg, then more carefully with the other. His brush just barely fit beneath the heavy strut holding up Prowl's right leg, and he gave that area a little extra special attention. The strut bolted onto his leg right at the ankle, and just above the knee, with a hinge so that his knee could still bend. As Jazz addressed the ankle end, he observed where the plating flared enough around the bolts to see the protoform underneath. Was it a little swollen? He wouldn't be surprised, the texts said that swollen ankles were a common enough occurrence later in a carriage.

Well, he could take care of that next. "All done." Jazz declared standing back up.

"Good. Now, allow me to return the favor." Prowl held out a hand for the brush.

Jazz didn't protest, he just obediently turned around so that Prowl could wash his back. The scent of expensive, imported soaps wafted around them, and the purr of Prowl's engine was just audible over the rush of the solvent pouring over them. Communal washing must be some sort of comfort to Prowl, and Jazz made a mental note to ask Ratchet later if it was a facet of Enforcer programming, or just a quirk unique to Prowl.

Cleaning went quicker here, since Jazz's backplate was less complex than Prowl's and he was able to do his own legs and pedes. Once all the suds had been rinsed off, he turned off the water and let the blow driers blast the last of the solvent from their plating.

"Now then. I know you're probably looking forward to that oil bath, but can I make an offer first." Jazz held up his hands. "Massage?"

"A massage?" Prowl repeated, helm tilting in question.

"Sure. Pre-natal massages are highly recommended for carriers. I'm sure your back and ankles are sore. And I've been told I have magic hands." Jazz wiggled his fingers for emphasis.

"I see." Prowl went over to the massage table and sat on it. "What should I-?"

"Just lay down on your side, and let me take care of you." Jazz instructed.

Once Prowl did just that, Jazz got to work. As he suspected, there was plenty of tension in the lower back where the weight of the newspark strained the greatest. Jazz pressed in deep, massaging the protoform and struts beneath flexible plating, and was rewarded with a deep groan of pleasure from Prowl.

Following the line of tension up, Jazz paused. "Can I remove your backplate?"

The sound of armor latches unlocking was his response. Jazz carefully eased the large plate out of its connectors and gently set it aside. Now Prowl's protoform was bare before him, all thin, interlocking pieces of sentio-metallico. Around the base of each wing was a ropey weld scar, left over from when Ratchet had reattached the appendages. Jazz traced them with a finger, before pressing his thumbs into the plates just below them and rubbing small circles. Prowl's wings twitched, before drooping as if he could no longer muster the effort to hold them up.

By the time he was done, Jazz almost hated that he had to ask Prowl to roll onto his other side. The Praxian did so slowly, sitting up and shifting so his wings wouldn't get pinched. Then Jazz went to work again.

Once all the stiffness in his back had been worked out, Jazz had him lie on his back for the ankle massage. He picked up one heavy pede and used the magnets in his hands to attract, then repulse the plating. This forced them to flare, then relax, massaging the protoform underneath.

Prowl's engine had settled into a deep, smooth grumble. "You are very good at this." He said softly, sounded almost to recharge.

"I told you, it's the magic hands." Jazz grinned cheekily and switched pedes.

Fortunately, Prowl was still awake (though barely) once Jazz declared him done. It was time for the highlight of the private room: the oil bath itself. And also time for Jazz to reveal the real purpose of this trip. Time to ask Prowl if they could be more than roommates-with-benefits.

Chapter 18

Prowl carefully stepped down into the oil pool, Jazz's hand on his arm as he sank into the warm liquid. It was nice to have the support, the massage had left him feeling so loose and relaxed that standing was a little difficult. Not that he would ever complain, it was nice to have the stiffness worked out of his back and legs.

The oil reached his knees, then his waist, and Prowl sank down into it. Unlike a solvent bath, the oil was buoyant and helped support the weight of his frame as he found one of the sitting niches and settled into it. With the oil up to his chin, Prowl flared his armor to let the golden liquid reach down to his protoform. Any aches that remained after Jazz's massage were soothed away by the warm oil.

"How is it?" Jazz asked as he found his own seat next to Prowl.

"It's nice." Prowl responded softly. His hands came to rest on his belly, where the newspark stirred briefly before settling back down. She was probably enjoying the warm oil, too. It was just the perfect temperature, taking the strain off his forge while not being so hot that his cooling system needed to activate. "We did not have an oil bath in the Enforcer barracks."

"They're a luxury, but a nice one." Jazz sighed and reclined back. "I'd be happy to bring you back if you wanted."

"That's a lot of creds-" Prowl hesitated.

"Please, Prowl." Jazz stopped him from protesting further. "I've told you before, I want to do nice things for you."

"Because I am carrying?" Prowl questioned. He leaned back a little further, letting the oil buoy his pedes up.

"Because you deserve nice things, carrying or not." Jazz smiled, and Prowl wasn't sure how to interpret the expression. Perhaps he meant because Prowl had lost everything in the destruction of Praxus. The Prime had offered to assist him with rebuilding his life, though Prowl had not yet taken him up on the offer.

He should at least get a cred account opened. He'd never had his own,

and had nothing to put in one, but the Prime's offer of help presumably extended to creds. Then he could stop feeling so bad for mooching off of Jazz.

Then, once the newspark had emerged and Prowl was finally able to heal from his injuries, he would need to look for an apartment of his own. And a job, though he hoped that the offer to join the Autobot Tactical Department would still be open.

It was a bit of a surprise to realize that he would miss having a roommate. Prowl had always thought he would hate co-habiting with another mech. He was easily annoyed by the little habits of other mecha, but Jazz was different. Not to say that he was never annoyed by Jazz, but he could forget it so easily when the mech turned around and did something so kind.

They would still have to see each other, of course, if only so that Jazz could have time with Bluestreak. Perhaps they could work out some kind of joint custody agreement.

"What're you thinking about?" Jazz's voice broke through Prowl's thoughts.

"Arrangements for once I am able to move out and have my own habsuite."

For some reason, that made Jazz frown unhappily. "Actually, Prowl, there was something I was hoping we could talk about while we're here."

Prowl looked at him curiously. "What is it?"

"I asked you to come out for a spa day because I wanted to do something nice for you, but also." Jazz hesitated uncharacteristically. "I thought, maybe, we could also consider it a first date."

"A date?" Prowl knew what that glyph meant, sure, but suddenly it seemed unfamiliar to his audials.

"Yes, because I wanted to ask you-" Jazz reached over and took Prowl's hand. "Prowl, may I court you?"

"Court." Prowl repeated, shock flooding his systems. "As in, for an endura bond?"

"In the future, if we want to, yes." Jazz gave him an encouraging

smile, which was nervous at the edges.

Prowl wasn't sure what to say. Enforcers didn't do endura bonds, their devotion was meant to be to their city. But Prowl no longer had a city. He no longer had anything, except his creations. Not even an owner. He was free, he could do whatever he wanted. Did he want-?

"You are saying this because you wish to remain with Bluestreak." Prowl guessed, having trouble believing that anyone would want *him*.

"No, Prowl. I'm saying this because I want to stay with *you*." Jazz emphasized. "I like you. A lot."

"Why?" Prowl asked softly. No one had ever liked him.

Black hands caressed his white one reassuringly. "Because you're smart, you're passionate, you have a good sense of humor."

"I don't have a sense of humor." Prowl protested. He had been told that often enough.

"Yes, you do." Jazz insisted. "You're a good mech, who's been dealt a slag hand in life. I want to show you that you can be loved."

Be loved. It sounded. . . nice. "Okay."

"Okay." Jazz gave a relieved little laugh. "Then I hope you're having a nice first date."

"Yes. I am enjoying this." Prowl said honestly. His wings waved slowly, sending swirls of current through the oil. "The massage was very pleasant, and the oil feels nice."

"Would you like to cuddle?" Jazz spread his arms in offer.

"Is that something that courtmates do?" Prowl questioned. They had cuddled before, yes, but only in berth and usually after an interfacing session. Never while both were fully awake.

"It can be. You don't have to if you don't want to." Jazz's arms remained open, non-judgmental and welcoming.

"I want to." Prowl moved closer, until he was reclined against Jazz's side, shifting awkwardly to try and get his wings comfortable.

"Here, let me-" Jazz adjusted Prowl, bringing the Praxian into his lap so that his back pressed against Jazz's front. "There, how's that?"

“Good.” Prowl did his best to relax against Jazz. The mech’s field surrounded him, steady and calm. Full of affection. For him. It was a novel thought.

One of Jazz’s hands hovered over the surface of his belly, before gently coming down to pet the gravid curve. Prowl gave a pleased hum and closed his optics, enjoying the soft touch on his sensitive protoform.

Then the hand started to wander lower, until Jazz’s fingers were skirting the edge of his codpiece.

“If you want me to stop, just say something.” Jazz murmured in his audial, stroking the seams of his inner thighs.

Prowl felt his valve begin to lubricate in anticipation, and he let his modesty plating slide aside. He wasn’t entirely sure where this was going, but he did know one thing. “Don’t stop.”

“Alright.” Jazz’s talented fingers found the soft folds of Prowl’s valve, playing with them and spreading them open. Prowl shivered whenever Jazz’s thumb brushed over his anterior node, unable to help making little whines from his vocalizer.

“It’s alright,” Jazz murmured soothingly into Prowl’s audial, dipping his fingers into the Praxian’s warm, wet channel and rubbing the elastic walls. His other hand came around to trace the seams of Prowl’s chest, circling his headlights and stroking over the armor that covered his spark.

Jazz seemed content to keep up his assault in a cool, collected way, driving up Prowl’s charge but not quite enough to overload. His warm ventilations wafted over Prowl’s helm and across the sensitive components of his chevron. There in the oil, with pleasure cascading through him, Prowl couldn’t think of anywhere else he’d rather be.

Then Jazz touched his cheek and gently turned his head so that he could lean down and lock lips. Prowl had never been kissed before and wasn’t quite sure what to do, but that was alright. Jazz was happy to take control, pressing in with a gentle but insistent pressure. Denta nipped at Prowl’s derma, until he gave in and parted his lips. Then there was a glossa inside him, toying with his own and exploring the confines of his mouth. Prowl had never before seen the appeal of kissing but now. Now he understood.

Under the slow but steady ministrations, Prowl felt his charge grow.

He was almost there, almost to overload. But he couldn't seem to quite crest that wave, never reaching all the way to having that energy peak.

He couldn't open his frame vents because of the oil, and his oral vent was blocked by Jazz's mouth, but the oil served as a giant heat sink to help bleed off overheating. Still, when Jazz pulled away to let him ventilate, Prowl exhaled a huff of super-heated atmosphere.

"Please-" Prowl said softly, rocking his hips into that hand still toying with his valve.

"Tell me what you want." Jazz whispered into his audial.

"I want-" Could he actually say it? "I want to overload."

"Alright. Since you asked so nicely."

The hand on his valve increased in speed, rubbing over his anterior node with quick, firm strokes. Prowl shuddered, head falling back against Jazz's shoulder. There was another hand in his undercarriage, finding the sensitive parts tucking up between his bumper and his belly. So close to his spark, which flared in anticipation.

"That's it." Jazz murmured encouragement. "Let go. Let it all go."

And so Prowl did, overload crashing over him. His frame went stiff, shuddering with the power of it. The hands that had been driving him moved to caress his belly instead, soothing and gentle. Prowl's hands drifted down to join Jazz's, resting over the curve of his newspark.

"You're beautiful when you overload." Jazz complimented once the aftershocks had faded.

"Beautiful?" Prowl questioned, looking up at Jazz with dim optics.

"Very." Jazz insisted, giving him another kiss. One that was softer but no less passionate.

"You- you didn't overload." Prowl observed. Because, as nice as that had been, he wanted Jazz to feel that pleasure to. Not to mention, he wanted all the transfluid his partner could offer.

"There'll be time for that when we get home." Jazz promised.

Prowl shivered, looking forward to it.

Chapter 19

Jazz hummed softly and stroked Prowl's helm, making the mech grumble softly and shift slightly under his blanket. They had been watching a movie and cuddling when Prowl had drifted off. Now the Praxian was in recharge, helm pillowed on Jazz's shoulder. A little lump under the blanket showed where Bluestreak was passed out as well, draped over his carrier's belly.

Being used as a pillow didn't bother Jazz at all. Though Prowl's recovery had progressed in leaps and bounds, forging a sparkling was still exhausting business. The Praxian deserved as much rest as he could get.

The sweet moment was interrupted by a knock on the door. Jazz could count on one hand the number of mecha who knew where his habsuite was, and he had a decent idea of who had come to see him.

"Prowl." Jazz nudged the Praxian who was in recharge atop him. "I gotta get up."

"Mmmnnn?" Prowl's optics onlined dimly and he slowly shifted himself into a more upright position. "What is it?"

"Prime's here." The Autobots had fought a hard battle recently, and Jazz wasn't entirely surprised that the big mech needed some sparkling time.

"What?" That got Prowl fully awake, optics wide and wings flared. An upset squeak came from the blankets as Prowl untangled himself and pulled out Bluestreak.

"You can stay put." Jazz reassured him as he got up to go unlock the door. "He probably just wants to see Bluestreak for a bit."

Despite this, when Jazz returned to the living room with Optimus, it was to find Prowl standing stiffly with Bluestreak in his arms.

"Prime, sir." Prowl bowed his head and dipped his wings respectfully.

"Optimus, please." Optimus gave him a smile. "You don't need to stand on my account, really. Go ahead and sit."

Prowl obeyed, slowly sinking back down onto the couch. Bluestreak let out a tired chirr, blinking up at Optimus. He squeaked in delight at seeing his big friend and held out his hands.

“May I?” Optimus asked politely.

“Of course.” Prowl allowed Prime to take his sparkling from his arms, watching with sharp blue optics as the bigger mech bounced Bluestreak a little and retracted his facemask so he could make funny faces.

“Hard cycle, big guy?” Jazz returned to his place on the couch and put an arm around Prowl.

“Hard decacycle.” Optimus said with a sigh. He pulled a brightly colored toy out of subspace, a stick with a ball on the end that rattled, and shook it in front of Bluestreak. The sparkling smiled, and that got a smile from the Prime as well. “It was a tough battle, but we did manage victory. If barely. It took me a little while to escape from the meetings, but I needed to get away from those stuffy generals and spend some time with my favorite little mech.”

“I am still interested in joining your tactical department.” Prowl put in. “I believe my skills could greatly benefit the Autobots.”

“As soon as your creations are a little older, I would be glad to have you.” Optimus promised. “But please, your family comes first. And speaking of, you two seem to have gotten. . . close.”

“We’re officially courting each other.” Jazz said with a proud grin, giving Prowl a little squeeze. The Praxian was stiff beside him, presumably because he was nervous in front of the Prime.

“Congratulations.” Optimus said sincerely. “I wish you two the best.”

“Thank you.” Prowl relaxed a micron against Jazz. “And, I wished to thank you.”

“Oh?”

“For annulling my contract.” Prowl explained. “It is of great relief to me to know that I am free.”

“You are very welcome. I only wish it hadn’t been necessary to begin with.” Optimus sank into his usual armchair, placing Bluestreak on his knee and bouncing him. “I have been trying to push through

legislation to end the practice of creation contracts altogether, but there has been a lot of pushback.”

“Most of the Cybertronian economy is dependent on the labor of contracted cold-constructs.” Prowl pointed out. “To end creation contracts would require a complete economic restructure.”

“I know.” Optimus grumbled. “And a complete redesign of the planet’s economy isn’t something I have time for with a war to fight as well.”

“Well, it has meant a lot to me.” Prowl hesitated. “And, there is another favor I had hoped to ask of you.”

“Anything.” Optimus seemed to almost jump at the chance to do something for Prowl. That big spark was exactly why Jazz had become his friend, back when he’d been Orion the lowly dockhand. And why he’d stayed with the mech through it all.

“I wish to open a cred account. You mentioned that there might be funds available to me?”

“Of course! I’ll have my financial officer set it up right away.” Optimus touched two fingers to his audial, indicating that he was sending off a comm about it right then and there. “You’ll just have to see a teller tomorrow to have it connected to your comm code and ID chip.”

“Thank you, sir.” Prowl’s wings relaxed a little from their rigid set. “I know that Jazz has insisted he doesn’t mind spending shanix on me, but I would like to have my own account.”

“It’s fine, Prowl.” Jazz certainly didn’t begrudge Prowl for wanting some financial independence. “We’ll have to go on a shopping trip tomorrow to celebrate.”

And so, the next cycle, they did indeed go on a shopping excursion after Prowl had gotten his account set up. (With enough funding in it to equal a vorn’s wages for a working class mech. Prowl had been astonished, but it was no more than he deserved after his ordeal.)

The destination of the trip was a sparkling goods store. The newspark would need some things, and Bluestreak would get to pick out a new toy as a treat.

They stepped in through the door of the store, and Prowl stopped in shock. Jazz hid a grin. The shop was expansive, containing everything a sparkling or youngling might want and then some. It was a riot of shapes and color, with toys of every description in every shade of the rainbow.

“Come on, lets go check out the containment berths first.” Jazz gently tugged Prowl, breaking him from his frozen surprise.

They didn’t manage to make it that far before Bluestreak spotted the toy he wanted and pulled his hand from Jazz’s grasp to lunge for it. He wrapped his stubby arms around a bright pink stuffed zap-pony as big as he was, and didn’t seem to be inclined to let go.

“Well, I think we know what toy Bluestreak’s picked for his treat.” Jazz said with a chuckle.

“Indeed.” A soft smile tugged at Prowl’s lips. “He seems quite attached.”

“Come on, Blue.” Jazz hefted sparkling and plushie into his arms. “You can have the pony. Now lets go look at berths for your little sister.”

There was an impressive selection of containment berths on display. Prowl’s brow furrowed as he looked between them, wings flicking a little as he thought. He went from berth to berth, reading the labels carefully like he was planning an Enforcer Raid.

“Don’t gotta be complicated.” Jazz took pity on him after a few kliks. “I’m sure she’ll just want something soft and sweet.”

One of the berths had a deep, thick pad and was painted sky blue with fluffy little clouds for decoration. A mobile hung over it, with dangling flight-frames and more clouds. It was horribly, painfully adorable.

“Do you think, maybe, she’d like this one?” Prowl reached in and pressed a finger into the berth padding, watching it sink in.

“I think she’ll love it, Prowl.” Jazz scanned the code on the tag to add it to their cart, then they moved on.

A blanket was picked out to match the crib, as well as a onesie to keep the newspark warm. (Jazz promised to find a tailor that could make cut-outs for the little one’s winglets.) Prowl also selected a carrying sling, which would keep the newspark secure against his chest until

the little one's magnets became reliable. Some more sparkling-safe bubble bath (Bluestreak had blown through Jazz's entire supply, again), and a bathing tub for the newspark.

One corner of the store was dedicated to bookfiles, with physical board books for sparklings and a list of available downloads for adults. Prowl paused at the screen and scrolled through the listing of books, most of which were about carrying, sparklings, or both. His finger hovered over a title, "The Complete Book of Carriage and Sparklings."

"Do you want that one?" It hadn't occurred to Jazz that Prowl might want a bookfile on carrying, since he had done it before.

"When carrying Bluestreak, I had a list of approved or forbidden activities and a strict diet, but I know very little about the actual process." Prowl explained softly.

"Then we'll get it." Jazz added it to the list. Then Bluestreak pulled out a board book on the cyberfauna of Cybertron, featuring textured inserts representing how each beast felt to touch. The two adults couldn't help but buy that too. Bluestreak was such a good sparkling, he could have another present.

Prowl paused again when they saw the display of strollers. Here, too, was a bewildering array of options.

"Want to get a stroller?" Jazz didn't have a problem carrying Bluestreak when the sparkling got tired of walking, but he was starting to get pretty heavy.

"I'd prefer to carry him, but--"

"But between the leg and the belly, it's probably getting pretty hard." Jazz finished for him.

"Yes." Prowl picked out the simplest model that would fit Bluestreak. Rather than add it to the list of items to be shipped to one of Jazz's drop addresses, Prowl took one straight to the check-out counter. Proudly, Prowl was able to pay for all of their purchases from his new cred account.

Bluestreak was strapped into the stroller, still holding tight to his new plushie, and they left the store. He seemed a little confused by this new mode of transportation at first, but the restraining straps held him in place just fine and soon enough he was bouncing and babbling as he pointed excitedly at all the things. Everything deserved a

dramatic point and a mangled exclamation of it's name. Prowl smiled indulgently, and said "That's right, Bluestreak," or gently corrected the sparkling when he got it wrong.

A small café was on the way back to their hab, so Jazz led the way inside so they could all get some drinks. Prowl stared at the menu, obviously caught once more in indecision due to the array of choices.

"Craving anything specific?" Jazz asked.

"I'm. . . not sure." Prowl's wings flicked thoughtfully. "I did like those squishy candies. The ones with gold casing?"

"Something sweet, then." Jazz pointed out a drink he thought Prowl might like, then ordered for himself and Bluestreak as well.

Once their drinks were ready, the three found seats on the outdoor patio, where they could watch the street and sidewalk traffic. There were mecha of every imaginable model walking, driving, or flying to and fro. Second shift had just ended, and Iacon was bustling.

"I have never seen so many different frametypes." Prowl observed as he sipped on his drink.

"Not much variety in Praxus?" Jazz questioned, though he had a good idea of the answer. Praxus had been infamous for its insular population.

"A few different sizes and shapes, but nothing like this." Prowl watched the traffic with keen optics.

"That's Iacon for you. A real melting pot." Jazz watched Prowl watching the traffic, enjoying seeing the mech's curiosity shine through. "So, what did you think of our second date?"

"Date?" Prowl's gaze was torn away from the streets to stare at Jazz instead.

"Yeah. Date." Jazz took one of his hands and leaned over the table to give Prowl a kiss on the cheek. "A nice shopping trip, and drinks at a cozy café. A pretty good date, by my standards."

"Ah." A bit of a flush came to Prowl's cheeks. "Then yes, a good date."

"Great." Jazz squeezed his hand and raised his glass. "Then here's to many more."

Prowl clinked his glass to Jazz's, then laughed when Bluestreak thrust in his sippy-cup to the toast as well. It was so good to see him smile, and hear him laugh. A good date, indeed.

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Prowl's wings twitched as he pushed Bluestreak's stroller down the sidewalk. It was the first time he'd gone out without Jazz accompanying him. There was no real reason to be nervous, he was a trained Enforcer in the safest city on Cybertron. And, even though he was carrying, he was not defenseless. He had his fangs and claws, and his acid-pellet rifle in subspace. Despite this, he was constantly on alert as he walked down the streets of Iacon. Finally, he reached the café he was looking for and made his way into the private room in the back, where he could finally turn his sensors down a little.

"Hey, Prowl, you made it!" Smokescreen greeted him cheerfully as he scooted his chair aside to make room. The other Praxians around the table said their hellos and waved their wings in greeting as well.

"Thank you." Prowl sat down and pulled up Bluestreak's stroller beside his chair. He hadn't been sure about coming to the Praxian social that he had been invited to, but all seemed happy to see him.

"Were you an Enforcer?" One of the other mecha, this one a blue standard-frame with squared off wings, leaned in with interest. "I didn't think Enforcers ever left Praxus."

"We didn't." Prowl confirmed. Though forged citizens of Praxus could, rarely, emigrate to other city-states, mecha under contract could not. And Enforcers stayed as such for their entire lives. They had been called for a single purpose, and remained in their function until they died. "I escaped the remains of the city after the bombing."

A surprised exclamation ran through the group.

"Wait, you were *in* Praxus when it was bombed?" Another mech, this one a garish red speed frame, asked in astonishment. "We heard rumor that a sparkling had been rescued by the Autobots, but not an Enforcer."

“Bluestreak was found by the Autobots.” Prowl nodded to his sparkling. “I followed my bond with him to Iacon.”

Everyone at the table stared at him, apparently impressed.

“That’s incredible!” One Praxian exclaimed.

“Did- did anymech else?” Another asked haltingly.

“No.” Prowl shook his head. “There were no other survivors.”

Everyone lowered their helms, sharing a moment of grief for their city and all the mecha in it.

“How many Praxians are left?” Because while there were 10 mecha in the room, Prowl was certain there must be more of his frame-kin somewhere. While emigrating from Praxus was rare, it wasn’t *that* rare.

“Hard to get an exact count.” Smokescreen answered. “We’ve got some who couldn’t make it tonight, or who are too busy to make these meetings. And there’s some Praxians in other city-states, of course. I’d say, around 100?”

1. Of a city state that had numbered 100,000. Prowl wanted to weep.

“And there’s one Praxian with the Decepticons.” One of the other mecha sneered. “A former Enforcer.”

A Praxian Enforcer, who had joined the Decepticons? Prowl had a hard time imagining it. The idea that one of his kin had not only left the city he had been sparked to protect, but to go so far as to join the faction that had destroyed it? “Who?” He wondered if it was someone he had known.

“Dunno his name.” Smokescreen shrugged, but his face was drawn into a scowl. “There’ve been battlefield reports of sighting a Praxian Enforcer on the Decepticon side, but no more than that.”

“We usually just call him The Traitor.” Said another at the table.

The Traitor.

Just then, a waiter came into the room to take orders, and the conversation turned to lighter things. The Praxians met at this café because it had a selection of Praxian fuels on the menu. Prowl had no

idea what to order, since such things hadn't been available to him even back in Praxus, but the others recommended to him a drink that had apparently been popular among carrying mecha.

When it arrived, it was, indeed, delicious. Prowl drained it embarrassingly quickly and ordered another.

Bluestreak seemed to be enjoying his drink as well, when he wasn't busy banging his cup against the tray on his stroller. Fortunately, the drink was in a spill-proof cube.

"He's a cute kid." Rapido, the red speed-frame, grinned. "How old is he?"

"Just over a vorn." Prowl answered, capturing the cup and doing his best to direct the spout into Bluestreak's mouth.

"Wow, and you're having another one already?" Rapido questioned. "You work fast."

"Ah, yes." Prowl shifted awkwardly. He hadn't been given much of a break between having Bluestreak and being sparked again. He hadn't had a choice. But, they didn't need to know that.

"Is the sire another Praxian?"

"He was, yes."

"Oh." Around the table, everyone bowed their helms and lowered their wings in an expression of grief. "Sorry for your loss."

"It's okay." Prowl said quietly. He was sad about Streetsmart's death, but only in the same way that he was saddened by all of the mecha who had died in the bombing.

Outside of their assigned couplings, Prowl and Streetsmart hadn't had much to do with each other. Prowl had spent his time in mecha-forensics, calculating bullet trajectories and blood spatters, while Streetsmart had been a top detective. Although, sometimes, Streetsmart had come by his desk and left him a ration cube when he had been too busy working to remember it himself. The mech had been kind, and well-liked.

Mostly, though, Prowl's memories of Streetsmart were of a hot frame against his back, harsh ventilations on his neck and a spike in his valve. Hazy and indistinct through the fog of drugs.

He had found Streetsmart's offline frame in the rubble, and had clawed open his frame to reach the fuel tank inside. He had sucked the last drops out of Streetsmart's lines. It was the last thing the star detective had been able to give his broodmech and their offspring.

The moment of silence for those lost was held for a few kliks, then everyone gave a brief shake of their wings. One could only grieve for so long.

A pack of cards was put on the table, and a game of Praxus Fold 'em begun. Prowl had never played, but once he was informed of the rules, he found it to be rather simple. Half of his processor kept track of the game, while he focused on making sure Bluestreak finished his fuel.

As they played, they gossiped. About the happenings in their respective neighborhoods, annoying coworkers, and memories of Praxus in the past. Prowl didn't have much to contribute, but he listened. And slowly, he relaxed.

He didn't end up winning the game, but that was alright. It had been. . . fun. To sit, and chat with other mecha. It wasn't something he'd ever really experienced before.

With the game done, one of the other Praxians pulled out a bag and took out several small clusters of crystals.

"Skids has been working on learning crystal cultivating." Smokescreen explained. "You can take one of the cuttings, if you want."

Prowl picked up one of the clusters, admiring the glittering facets. "I do not know how to care for crystals."

"That's alright." Skids said. "I can forward you care instructions. I've been working on recovering crystal care guides from archives around Cybertron."

"I see. Well, I am willing to try." Prowl subspaced the crystal and pinged Skids his comm code so that he could be sent the download.

The meeting broke up, mecha peeling off to return to their jobs and their lives. Prowl stood slowly and tugged Bluestreak's stroller away from the table, preparing himself to go out once more. All told, he had enjoyed the gathering. He promised to return next decacycle.

Prowl had planned to head back to Jazz's habsuite, but Bluestreak was fidgety. He kept bouncing in his seat and babbling, and pointed excitedly when they passed a small park.

"Do you want to play?" It would probably be good to let Bluestreak get some of his energy out before returning to the hab.

"Yeeeah!" Bluestreak cheered as Prowl turned to the park. He parked the stroller next to a bench and reached down to unbuckle the sparkling's restraints.

"Alright, go play." Prowl lifted Bluestreak out of the stroller and set him on the ground, watching carefully as the sparkling toddled off towards the play structure. Another sparkling was there already, climbing up the small slide.

"He's very cute."

Prowl looked as another mech took a seat on the bench next to him. A sturdy labor-frame, the mech's rounded belly told of his condition.

"Ah, thank you. Is that one yours?" Prowl nodded to the other sparkling who was playing.

"Yep." The mech said proudly. "We love him so much. Me and my conjunx are excited for our next too."

"As am I." Prowl settled a hand on his belly. Inside him, he felt the newspark shift.

"How far along are you?"

"Ah, just into my fourth quartex." Time had passed so quickly, it was hard to believe she was almost there.

"Have you been thinking about names yet?" The mech asked. "We've come up with a whole list, but it's so hard to choose."

Prowl froze. A name. Yes, his newspark would need a name. "Ah, yes. It is very. Hard."

"Well, I'm sure you'll think of a good one. Ah-" The mech's sparkling had taken a tumble and was now bawling loudly. "I better go take care of that. Have a good cycle!"

Prowl watched the mech go, processor occupied with the new challenge he had been given. Eventually, Bluestreak tired himself out

and Prowl strapped him back into the stroller. By the time they had returned home, the sparkling was hard in recharge.

“Hey, Prowl.” Jazz was already there waiting, having finished whatever business had taken him to the Autobot base that cycle. “Did you enjoy the Praxian get-together?”

“I did.” With Jazz’s help, they got Bluestreak out of the stroller and settled into his containment berth so he could continue his nap. “We talked for a while, and played cards. I also received a crystal cutting.” Prowl pulled out the cluster for Jazz to see.

“Oh, that’s really nice.” Jazz took the crystal and held it up to the light, making the facets sparkle. “We’ll have to get a tray and some substrate for it.”

“I have a download of the care instructions.” Prowl returned to the living room and gratefully sank down onto the couch. His back ached, but then, it always did at this point. His ankles were sore too. He rolled his pedes trying to work out the stiffness.

“Pede massage?” Jazz offered as he sat down next to Prowl.

“I would appreciate that.” Prowl shifted to recline sideways and lifted his pedes into Jazz’s lap.

Jazz got to work, and Prowl relaxed into the couch. Still, the thought of names occupied his processor. What name would suit his newspark? How could he ever choose? What if she hated it?

“You seem awful thoughtful.” Jazz commented as he worked his fingers into the gaps of the armor on Prowl’s ankles. “Shanix for your thoughts?”

“It is something that was said to me today.” Prowl felt a little silly, being so worked up over something so simple. “I will need to come up with a designation for the newspark.”

“Well, sure.” Jazz rubbed soothing circles into Prowl’s swollen protoform. “Got anything in processor?”

“I don’t know how I will ever choose.” Prowl said softly.

Jazz paused. “You didn’t get to choose Bluestreak’s name, did you?”

“No.” That was another choice that had been taken from Prowl.

“Well, I’m sure you’ll come up with something great.” Jazz said encouragingly. “And if you need any help, I’m always here for you.”

“Thank you.” Prowl huffed as a kick caught him in the fuel tank. Apparently, someone had woken up. He rubbed a hand over the spot the newspark had chosen to abuse that evening.

“She knows we’re talking about her.” Jazz said with a grin. He reached over to gently press a hand to Prowl’s belly. “She’s so strong.”

“Yes. Even after being through so much.” Prowl was still amazed that she had survived, after the stress of his ordeal.

“She’s like her carrier that way.” Jazz’s grin softened into a kind smile. “You can do this, Prowl. I believe in you.”

“Thank you.”

Chapter End Notes

For the purpose of this fic, "Streetsmart" is a completely separate character from "Streetwise"

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Happy Valentine's Day!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Jazz was so thrilled that Prowl was getting out and meeting people. From what he knew of the mech's life back in Praxus, he had never really had the opportunity to socialize. That was no way to live.

It also made Jazz feel better to know that Prowl would have mecha to turn to besides him. Not that Jazz minded supporting Prowl, but it was good for him to expand his social network. Jazz couldn't be there for him every klik of the cycle.

Now he had the other Praxians in their group, and he seemed to be getting along well with Ironhide too when they saw the old soldier at the playground with the twins. Prowl was really coming out of his shell.

Then there was the way that Prowl lit up when Jazz brought him the notes from the latest officer's meeting. Nothing classified or incredibly sensitive, as much as Jazz wanted to give Prowl everything, but enough, he hoped, to get the Praxian's opinion.

Prowl sat on the couch, gaze fixed on the datapad as he read. His wings waved slowly, a little up and down motion that Jazz didn't think the mech was conscious of. It was adorable.

"It is difficult to give a direct course of action without all of the details," Prowl finally said, scribbling his notes onto the pad. "But I have made a few recommendations. An experienced analyst working with the full information should be able to extrapolate from there."

If they didn't just dismiss the recommendations out of hand. But still, Jazz had to try.

Officers Meetings were always an exercise in frustration. The Top Generals were a bunch of golden-age old farts who knew more about colonization than civil warfare. Jazz wished Optimus would just sack them all, but then there was the question of who'd fill their spaces.

Plus, the Senate would oppose any attempt to replace their fellows. The slagging useless Senate who Optimus was nonetheless forced to pander to.

Jazz presented the suggestions Prowl had made, without revealing who was behind it, and as he had feared, none of the generals took him seriously. He was a spy and saboteur, what did he know of war strategy? Gritting his denta, Jazz appealed to Optimus, who could only promise to take his recommendations under consideration.

Irritated and unhappy, Jazz dropped by the base racetrack to work out some of his energy before returning home. Prowl didn't need to deal with his frustration.

Entering his apartment, Jazz heard the sound of something sizzling on the cooker. There was Prowl, standing in the kitchen with a datapad propped up before him, stirring something in a pan.

"Making dinner?" Jazz questioned, looking around for Bluestreak. "Where's Blue?"

"Taking a nap." Prowl carefully poured some ore into a measuring cup, holding it up to his optics to get the level just perfect. "Torque found a Praxian recipe book in an archive and shared it with the group today. I thought I would try and make something."

"Sounds great." Jazz took a seat at the counter, watching Prowl measure out some oil with exacting precision. "What 'cha making?"

"Cadium-sheeppracron stir-fry." Prowl gave the pan a flick, tossing the contents gently. "It will be done in a few klicks."

"I can't wait." The rustle of blankets had Jazz going into the berthroom and fetching a now-awake Bluestreak. The sparkling was still sleepy, but perked up at the smell of fuel cooking.

Prowl turned off the cooker and served a plate for himself, one for Jazz, and a smaller portion for Bluestreak. Jazz was satisfied to see that he had given himself the largest helping.

Jazz wasn't entirely sure what to expect when he took his first bite, but he was pleasantly surprised. Prowl was no gourmet, but the stir-fry was quite tasty. "Hey, this is pretty good!"

"Thank you." Prowl managed to coax a spoon-ful into Bluestreak's mouth, then took a bite of his own plate. "Hmm. It was an interesting

experiment. I will have to try more.”

“I look forward to it.” Jazz said honestly.

The news that evening told a dismal story. The Autobots had been pushed back, and it was starting to look like Helex would be the next to fall into Decepticon hands. Prowl frowned as he watched the news coverage. “They did not listen to my suggestions, I see.”

“I’m sorry, Prowl.” Jazz had feared it would go this way. “I tried, but they don’t got a great track record of listening to me, unless it has to do with crawling into Decepticon bases.”

Prowl clenched a fist and grit his denta. “I wish-“ He put a hand on his round belly and took a deep breath, then sighed. “Nevermind. Thank you for trying, Jazz.”

“We’ll keep trying.” Jazz promised.

That night, Prowl lay down on the berth and presented himself as he usually did. He was too big now to lay on his back for interface, so he got himself comfortable on his side and tucked a pillow under his belly for support.

But as Jazz gently bent one of Prowl’s legs and rubbed at his valve, the Praxian shifted. “Wait.”

Jazz immediately stopped. “What?”

“I-“ Prowl hesitated, looking up at Jazz. “Where should I touch you? I want you to feel good as well.”

His first thought was to deflect the question. To reassure Prowl that it was okay, Jazz didn’t need reciprocation. This was about Prowl, and making sure he enjoyed the experience.

But then, Jazz tried to look at it in a different way. Prowl wanted to be more participatory in their interfacing, to do something other than lie there and take it. That was a good sign.

“My headlights, and the underside of my bumper.” Jazz instructed. “My audial horns, as well. My hips.”

A tentative hand brushed over his headlights, and Jazz hummed in encouragement. Slowly, it became bolder, finding the seams around his bumper and brushing against the wiring hidden there. Jazz bent down to find Prowl's lips with his own, happy to feel Prowl relax into it. He was getting much better at kissing with experience. Jazz nipped at his lips, then moved upward to give in to his desire to see how sensitive Prowl's chevron was. As he nibbled along one edge, Prowl gasped and writhed beneath him. Score.

A hand came up to grip one of his audial horns, and Jazz leaned his helm into the touch. This was nice. Jazz had interfaced plenty of times in his life, but now he thought he understood why it was also referred to as 'making love.'

Gently, Jazz eased himself into Prowl, relishing the familiar wet heat around his spike. His pelvic plating met Prowl's thighs with a soft slap with each thrust. Prowl's frame bore little sign of the intense ordeal he had gone through. Instead of a gaunt, starved mech, he was now pleasingly plump. His thighs and hips had thickened, better to carrying the weight of the newspark, and his belly was round and firm. He was beautiful.

Jazz held him as they rocked together, chasing their mutual pleasure. Slowly, Prowl's tightly held EM field unfurled, buzzing with pleasure and contentedness. His tentative touches grew bolder, tracing the seams and wires of Jazz's frame. Electrical charge crackled between them, little zaps of white lightning zipping from Jazz to Prowl and back again. Prowl's field was hot and heavy, thick with the extra charge of a carrying mech.

Then, between them, a new field bloomed. Quiet and tentative, but full of love. The newspark, exploring a tiny bit of the world outside.

"Hey, there." Jazz crooned, stroking a hand over Prowl's belly. If he pressed a little, he could feel the hard shape of what he thought might be the newspark's helm.

"She likes you." Prowl informed him with a soft smile, the carrier was much more sensitive to his newspark's emotions.

"Good. Because I love her." Jazz pressed a kiss to Prowl's belly.

"You do not know her." Prowl commented, brow furrowing.

"Doesn't matter." Jazz insisted. "I love her all the same. Just as much as I love Bluestreak." Once again, Jazz was struck by the urge to claim

them both, to be more than a caretaker. To be their *sire*. But there would be a better time to talk about that later.

Still, Jazz would donate his energy and his transfluid to the newspark, so that she could grow big and strong. And he would consider her his all the same.

Overload finally came, then Jazz began the work of cleaning up. Prowl mumbled, trying to help, but, as always, overload had left him tired and nearly to recharge.

“S’alright, Prowl. Just recharge.” Jazz tossed the soiled cumrag into the hamper, then tugged the covers up over Prowl before crawling in beside him.

It was the middle of the night when Jazz awoke with a start. His systems weren’t pinging him about any threat, but there was movement beside him all the same. The source, of course, was only Prowl. He had pulled the blankets back and was carefully easing out from under them. He caught the glow of Jazz’s visor with a guilty look. “I’m sorry.” He whispered softly. “I didn’t mean to wake you.”

“It’s okay. Getting kicked?” Jazz guessed.

“Yes. And, I’m also hungry.” Prowl seemed rather embarrassed to admit it.

Jazz chuckled softly. “Well then. Let’s get you some fuel.”

“You don’t have to-“ Prowl started.

“Too bad, I’m doing it.” Jazz was already getting off the berth. “Come on, there’s snacks in the cupboard. Craving anything in particular?”

Prowl’s cheeks colored slightly. “Those gold nuggets with the sweet energon filling?”

“You got it.” Jazz was pretty sure he had some. And if he didn’t, he would go out to the nearest all-joor store to find it.

He did have it, though, and so Prowl was able to snack as he paced laps around the living room. Between his limp and the waddle he’d begun to develop, he wasn’t particularly quick, but that was alright.

Jazz kept pace beside him all the same.

They walked in silence for a time, until Prowl finished off his snacks and sighed softly.

“More?” Jazz questioned.

“No.” Prowl tipped his helm back, looking up at the dark ceiling of the apartment. “I remember, I often did this with Bluestreak. Wake up in the middle of the night, I mean. To walk the hallways of the Enforcer barracks until he settled down. It was always so quiet, when the day shift was in recharge and the night shift was out working. I found it rather peaceful.”

“I see.” Jazz had felt bad when he thought about Prowl pacing alone during his first carriage, but perhaps he had enjoyed the solitude? “I can leave you be, if you want. If you’d prefer to be by yourself.”

Prowl’s gaze drifted down until he was looking into Jazz’s visor. His normally ice-blue optics were dim and fuzzy, he was clearly still tired. But the smile that tugged at his lips made Jazz’s spark flare in his chest. “No, it’s okay. I’ve found I rather like having the company.”

Then Jazz would stay beside him, for as long as Prowl allowed him.

Chapter End Notes

I want to thank everyone who's taken the time to leave a comment on this fic. Your comments are what motivate me to keep writing!

Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Prowl felt a familiar prick of anxiety as he walked into the medical clinic. He was there for a simple pre-natal checkup, but the stark white walls and scent of disinfectant always brought back memories. Of countless tests being run on his processor, of crash after crash as his glitch was triggered. Of emotionless medics, taking notes and supervising their patient without a word of comfort.

There would be none of that today, Prowl knew. Ratchet was a good medic. He was gruff and stern, but his touch was always gentle and he never failed to explain to his patient exactly what he was doing and why.

In the waiting room, Prowl found a chair and sank down into it. Jazz found the chair next to him, Bluestreak held in his arms. All around, other mecha also waiting for their appointments filled the seats. There were several other creators with sparklings, and a couple of other carriers. It made Prowl feel comfortingly normal. He was just another creator, there with his partner and his sparkling. Though his Praxian frame still got him stares and odd looks, here he was not a failed experiment or broodmech.

After a short wait, Prowl and Jazz were called back into a private room. A kind nurse came by to take his fuel pressure and basic diagnostics, before Ratchet entered.

“And how are you doing today, Prowl?” The medic inquired, giving his chart a brief scan.

“I am well.” Prowl sat on the edge of the padded exam berth, hands in his lap.

“You certainly do seem to be doing better.” Ratchet commented, looking at the read out on the berth. “Weight is up, good. I’d say you’re finally within a healthy weight range for a mech of your frametype at this stage of carriage.”

“That is good.” Prowl agreed. He had been worried about his size for much of the carriage, but it seemed he had finally caught up with where he’d been last time.

Ratchet patted his knee. “I’d like to give Bluestreak a quick check-up, then we can do a scan and take a look at the newspark.”

Bluestreak squirmed a little as Ratchet plugged into his diagnostic port, but the medic was quick and disconnected before it could devolve into crying. Then Bluestreak got an energon lolly for being such a good boy, and all was well again. He was perfectly healthy, and had grown since his last check-up.

Prowl laid back for his own examination, lacing his hands together along the underside of the great curve of his belly. He tensed a little as a scanner probe was pressed to his abdomen, but Ratchet kept the touch professional and gentle. The medic had even pre-warmed the scanner, so that it wouldn’t feel cold against his hot forge.

After a few passes over his belly, the scanner beeped and projected a 3-D image of a curled up form. Prowl let out a soft gasp. The newspark looked like an actual sparkling now, with a big, round helm and four perfect little limbs. When the image turned a little, Prowl could see two narrow panels folded down against her back. Tiny sensor wings.

“Look at that, Prowl.” Jazz leaned forward, arms wrapped around Bluestreak in his lap. “She’s got your wings.”

“Yes. She does.” Prowl said softly, gaze transfixed by the image. As he watched, the newspark clenched her fists and hid her face behind them.

“Oooh-“ Bluestreak reached forward and stuck his hand into the hologram, chirping in confusion when it went straight through.

“Yeah, bitty Blue. That’s your sister.” Jazz chuckled. “She’s still in your carrier’s tummy, though, that’s just a picture.”

“Ooo.” Bluestreak waved a hand through the image again, watching the hologram shimmer.

“Here, let me make you a couple of prints.” Ratchet pressed a button on the scanner, and it obligingly spat out copies of the image from a few different angles.

“Thank you.” Prowl looked at the prints for a klik before subspacing them.

“I was worried that she might come prematurely, but if you both continue to make such good progress, I see no reason you won’t be able to carry to term.” Ratchet turned off the holo-imager and wiped the conductive gel from Prowl’s belly. “I expect that to be in another 7 to 8 decacycles.”

“That is very good to hear.” Prowl was very pleased to hear it. As much as he wanted his sparkling there in his arms, he wanted her to emerge healthy even more. If that meant carrying for another quartex, then that was fine.

“It is. I’m very impressed with your progress. If only all my patients were so compliant.” Ratchet grumbled good-naturedly. “How’s your leg feeling?”

“Stiff.” Prowl shifted his injured leg. “And it gets sore when I stand or walk for awhile.”

“But no serious pain?” Ratchet nodded in satisfaction when Prowl shook his helm. “Good. I’ll be able to weld it once you’ve sufficiently recovered from emergence, probably at least three decacycles. Until then, try to get in short walks daily. Your gestation chamber can pinch the fuel lines to your legs if you sit for too long. But stop or find a place to sit if your leg hurts too bad.”

“Yes, medic.” Easy enough to achieve. The newspark seemed to settle best when he walked, so that wouldn’t be too hard an instruction to follow.

“Is there anything else you wanted me to address today?”

“My chest is feeling sore. And somewhat. . . bloated?” Prowl wasn’t entirely sure how to describe the uncomfortable sensation behind his chest plating.

“Hmm.” Ratchet, at least, didn’t seem too concerned. “Open up and let me see.”

Prowl let his chest plating fold aside, and immediately realized just what had been causing his soreness. His fuel pouches were swollen, the nozzles hard and erect.

“Yep. It’s just your fuel coming in.” Ratchet confirmed. “There’s not

much to be done about the discomfort, unfortunately. It's just part of the auxiliary fueling system activating. I can give you a cream that will help with any chafing, at least."

"Will they be. . . enough?" Prowl questioned. Because his fuel pouches weren't very large. Certainly not as big as Jazz's. It didn't seem like they would produce enough to fuel a sparkling.

"It will be fine, Prowl." Ratchet reassured him. "Your systems will be able to refine more fuel once you're not also forging a sparkling. And even if your output falls short, there are formulas you can use to supplement. I'm sure Jazz will be able to assist as well."

"You got it!" Jazz chimed in. "The newspark won't go hungry, I promise."

"Thank you." Prowl ducked his helm, a little overwhelmed by having so much support. He still wasn't used to having mecha willing to help him.

Ratchet made him another appointment in three decacycles and gave him the cream for his nozzles, then they were free to go.

Rather than go back home just yet, Prowl and Jazz headed for a nearby park. This one didn't have a playground, but it did have some nice crystal clusters and a mercury fountain. Bluestreak was fascinated by the jets of the fountain, which shot up spurts of mercury on a synchronized schedule.

Taking a seat on a bench next to the fountain, Prowl leaned back a little and did his best to just try and relax. This was nice. The crystals were beautiful, their facets shimmering in the sunlight, and Bluestreak was laughing every time the fountain's jets shot off with a 'woosh!'

"It reminds me a little of the crystal gardens in Praxus." Prowl commented softly.

"Yeah?" Jazz looked around, Bluestreak held tightly in his lap to keep the sparkling from running off and dunking himself in the fountain. "What were they like?"

"There were crystals of all shapes and sizes and colors. Many were arranged so that any noise would make them resonate gently, and they chimed in the wind." Prowl smiled softly as he reminisced. "There was a small garden in the courtyard of Enforcer headquarters. I often went there to relax after a shift."

“That does sound nice.” A breeze blew through the park, but the crystals didn’t make a sound. These were not the resonating variety so famous in Praxus. “I’m sorry about what happened to Praxus. Even if the government sounds like they were a bunch of slaggars, it sounds like the city was beautiful.”

“It was.” Prowl confirmed. “And there were many wonderful mecha in it.”

“When we get this war won, I’m sure we’ll be able to rebuild.” Jazz rested a hand on his shoulder encouragingly. “Praxus will exist again.”

“I hope so.” For all that Praxus had done to him, Prowl did hope that the city and its former inhabitants would be able to rebuild. And maybe this time, they would make it better.

A few cycles later, Jazz was off to Autobot Headquarters on official business, and Prowl headed out with Bluestreak to the café where the Praxian meetup was happening. It still made him nervous to be out on the streets without Jazz, but he was slowly getting better at not walking around with his sensors tuned to full and his wings on high alert.

He was getting better at socializing too. The other Praxians were always genuinely happy to see him, and greeted him as one of their own.

“Still carrying, I see.” One of them commented with a laugh as Prowl took his usual seat in the back meeting room.

“Yes.” Prowl leaned back a little as he got settled, trying to find a position that was comfortable. It was getting more and more difficult as the cycles passed. “For another 7 to 8 decacycles, the medic thinks.”

“We’ll have to throw you a party.” Smokescreen said with a grin.

“A party?”

“Yeah, to welcome the sparkling.” Smokescreen looked like he was already planning it all out. “First new Praxian born.”

“Do you have plans to connect Bluestreak and the newspark to their heritage?” Turbo asked.

"I. Hope so." Because Prowl wanted to, but if he was honest, he knew woefully little about Praxian culture. For all that he'd been built there, he hadn't spent much time outside of Enforcer headquarters.

"We'll help!" Turbo promised. Around the table, the other Praxians nodded eagerly. "We won't let Praxian culture die. No matter what the Decepticons do, our frametype will survive, and our culture with it."

"Thank you." It was still overwhelming to see so many mecha willing to help him. To support him, and his creations. "I appreciate it, really."

Talk turned to other things, and the cards came out for a game of Praxus Fold 'em. Next to Prowl, Bluestreak had been given a tablet and a light-pen, and was happily scribbling across the canvas. About halfway through the game, Bluestreak reached out to tug at Prowl's elbow.

"Yes, Bluestreak?" Prowl looked over at his creation's artwork curiously.

"Pow." Bluestreak pointed at one blob on the screen, several black circles with a red scribble on top. "Jasz." Another black scribble, with blue and red stripes and the blue slash of a visor. "Boo." The smallest scribble, between the two.

"It's wonderful." Prowl pressed a button on the tablet to save the artwork. "I shall have it printed so we can post it on the wall when we get home."

After a few joors, the meeting ended and everyone went their separate ways. Prowl pushed Bluestreak's stroller down the sidewalk, thinking about what had been said at the meeting. He wasn't entirely sure about having a party, he wasn't one to enjoy being the center of attention, but perhaps it would be fun. He would have to wait and see, he supposed.

Prowl's wings gave a twitch, and he frowned. Something felt. . . wrong. He extended his sensors to their extent, but couldn't figure out just what was bothering him. He looked around, but didn't see anything amiss. Really, he didn't see anything at all. He was on a street off the main commercial drag, and there were no other pedestrians in sight.

There was a sharp prick in the back of his neck, and Prowl clapped a hand over the bite. When he pulled it away, he found a small dart in

his hand. Suddenly, foreign coding filtered into his processor. The world went fuzzy, and Prowl stumbled slightly. Before he could fall, though, there were arms wrapped around him and holding him up. A voice spoke, one that sounded almost. Familiar. But before Prowl could place it, the tranquilizer coding dragged him down into blackness.

Chapter End Notes

>:D

Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jazz let out a frustrated growl as he stomped out of Autobot Headquarters and headed for home. He had lost contact with one of his agents, and no one really seemed to care. Jazz itched to get back into the field himself, but knew he couldn't with Prowl and Bluestreak relying on him. He would just have to deploy someone he trusted implicitly, perhaps Mirage or Hound.

When Jazz returned to his habsuite, he was surprised to find that Prowl and Bluestreak weren't there. It was the cycle that they attended the Praxian meetup, but they should have been back by now. Perhaps they had gone to a park, or a store.

Turning on the vidscreen, Jazz settled onto the couch and tried to relax, but it was difficult. He hadn't been alone in his habsuite since the Fall of Praxus. It seemed too quiet without Bluestreak's cheerful babbling, or Prowl's snarky commentary. Too cold, without Prowl's warm frame at his side or Bluestreak draped across his lap.

After a joor of waiting, Jazz fired off a comm ping to Prowl. It came back undelivered, something that would only happen if a mech were offline or had their communication systems completely offline. Jazz didn't like it at all.

::Smokescreen:: Jazz messaged his Praxian subordinate. ::Did Prowl and Bluestreak go to your meeting today?::

::Hey, Jazz. Yeah, they were here:: Smokescreen answered. ::Why?::

::Do you know where they went afterwards?:: Jazz questioned.

::To the park, I think. What's wrong?::

::They haven't come home, and Prowl's comm system is off or blocked:: Jazz jumped off the couch and headed for the door. ::I'm coming to investigate::

::I'll meet you at the café::

Jazz drove down the streets of Iacon with his sensors on high alert,

scanning for Prowl or Bluestreak's familiar spark signature. By the time he'd reached the café, though, he'd found nothing.

"Jazz!" Smokescreen pulled up in front of the café just after Jazz did and transformed. "Find anything?"

"Just got here." Jazz looked up and down the street, watching mechanisms come and go. "Which way did they go after the meeting?"

"I think they were heading to Crystal Grove Park." Smokescreen pointed. "They headed off that way."

Jazz cross-referenced the location of the park with the street grid. "Well let's follow his tracks. If I was Prowl, and I was headed towards Crystal Grove Park, I would go this way."

And so Jazz and Smokescreen walked in the direction of the park, helms on a swivel as they looked for any sign of Prowl and Bluestreak. Their path took them away from the shops and bustle of the main street and onto a quieter residential street. As Jazz looked into the narrow alley between two apartment buildings, he saw it. A sparkling's stroller, abandoned on its side. Bluestreak's stroller.

"No!" Jazz rushed over and dropped to his knees next to the stroller. There was no sign of Bluestreak. The only thing there was a datapad, it's screen cracked. Jazz turned it on, and the screen flickered before displaying a set of scribbles.

"That's. Bluestreak drew that during the meeting." Smokescreen said softly, kneeling down next to Jazz. "This is Bluestreak's stroller."

"Yeah." Jazz clenched a hand into a fist, joints creaking. "Somebody took him. And Prowl. Because Prowl would never let Bluestreak go without a fight."

"Decepticons?" Smokescreen guessed.

"I don't know." Fury coursed through Jazz's frame, and his visor flared. "But I intend to find out."

Jazz reported the kidnapping to Optimus, and was immediately authorized to use all the resources of the Autobots to track down the missing Praxians. The first task, of course, was to figure out who took

them.

Unfortunately, the residential street had no street cameras, so Jazz had to start the old-fashioned way. By canvassing the area and interviewing mecha. So he made his way from shop to shop, asking if the owners had seen Prowl and Bluestreak. The two stood out in a crowd, so it wasn't difficult to find people who had seen them. But none of them had noticed anything suspicious, like someone following them.

As he went into the seventh shop, Jazz found the owner and asked once again. "Did you see a Praxian Enforcer today? He's carrying, and would have had a sparkling with him."

"Sure, I saw a Praxian Enforcer. He was alone, though, and he wasn't carrying." The mech said.

Jazz frowned. "What do you mean?"

"He pulled up in front of my shop, and I thought it was pretty odd. I mean, a Praxian Enforcer?" The mech shrugged. "Then he transformed and walked off that way."

"Transformed. He was in alt?" Definitely not Prowl, who wasn't capable of transforming. Were there even any other Praxian Enforcers left? Jazz didn't know of any that had survived Praxus except for Prowl and-

Barricade.

The only Praxian on the Decepticon side, and only other Praxian Enforcer that Jazz knew of. It could be no other.

Jazz spun on his heel and ran out, already on the comm to his agents. He wanted the whereabouts of Barricade and he wanted them now.

::Blaster. I have a lead. Look through all the traffic cameras in the city, Barricade has been in Iacon. I want to know how he got in, and where he went.:: Jazz transformed and hit the streets, weaving through traffic at twice the speed limit. He was too pissed off to sit around.

::You got it, Jazz.:: Blaster responded immediately. ::Might take a bit, that's a lot of cameras, but we'll track him down.::

With nothing else he could do right then, Jazz had little choice but to head home. Except that he was far too restless for that, so instead he

wheeled around and headed back for the Autobot base instead. He needed to vent some frustration.

The dummies in the training room were the victims of his anger. Jazz blasted hard and heavy music through his speakers as he mowed down the training dummies one after another. His knives flashed in his hands as they found targets in fake spark chambers, faces, and limbs. Though Jazz normally prided himself in elegance and efficiency as he fought, here there was none of that. Only brutal ruthlessness. Jazz just wished it were Decepticons feeling the sting of his blades, and not soulless machines.

There were only so many training dummies to slaughter, though, and after several joor, the supply ran dry. Jazz stood in the middle of the training room, vents steaming and heat pouring off his frame. His shoulders heaved as he bent down to retrieve his knives from the last dummy. Energy still buzzed through his frame, the kind of sickly charge that came after a long, hard fight without a satisfying end. He was still pissed off, still angry, only now he was tired on top of it all. Slaughtering an army of training dummies hadn't helped at all.

The door to the training room opened and Jazz whirled around, dentabaring and visor flashing. Who dared interrupt him?

"Jazz." Mirage stood there in the doorway, hands non-threateningly at his sides and face stern. "Are you done?"

"Mirage." Jazz sheathed his knives and crossed his arms. "What do you want?"

"Are you done with your tantrum?" Mirage asked again, stepping into the room. His golden optics scanned the piles of broken drones with disdain.

"Shut up!" Jazz snarled.

"Prowl and Bluestreak are gone, and here you are, destroying training drones." Mirage picked his way through the wreckage.

"What else can I do?" Jazz's hands clenched into fists, shaking with rage and helplessness. "I'd track down that bastard Barricade and rip him apart with my bare hands if I knew where he was, but I don't. I've got everybody I could contact looking for him, but who knows where he's keeping Prowl and Blue."

"They will need you to be at your best if you're going to rescue them."

Mirage finally reached Jazz and put a gentle hand on his shoulder. "They need Jazz the helm of Special Operations, not an emotional disaster."

"Who are you calling an emotional disaster?" Jazz demanded, even though he knew it was true. He had been through a lot in his life, but nothing had ever gotten under his plating quite like this. He was angry, and he was scared. Terrified.

"Get some recharge." Mirage said firmly, in a tone that booked no argument. "Let us work, we will find them. And when we do, you can go get them."

All at once, the fight went out of Jazz. He slumped, abruptly feeling exhausted. "I'm not sure I can recharge." Jazz admitted softly. "I. Don't want to be alone."

Mirage's stern expression softened somewhat, and he gave his commander a small smile. "You still have friends. We're here to help you. Come back to my habsuite with me."

And so Jazz did, following his friend back to Mirage's posh apartment in the nice part of Iacon. Though Mirage had been excommunicated from The Towers, he was still able to enjoy the nicer things in life. Jazz had known him since before the Autobots, since he had been nothing but a spy for a local gang. He had been given a hit to perform, only to have a far more experienced assassin beat him to the punch. Fortunately, Mirage had taken pity on the young guttermech and not killed him on the spot.

And now Jazz was his boss, though Mirage had never held it against him. They had been intimate a time or two as well, though not since Mirage had become exclusive with Hound. And now Jazz had Prowl. But still, Mirage was probably his oldest friend.

Curled up in the berth with Mirage, Jazz tried to find solace in Mirage's familiar field. But his processor wouldn't rest. It was too busy coming up with all of the terrible things that Barricade and the Decepticons could be doing to Prowl right then, while he rested safe and warm.

Not much was known about Barricade. He was a former Praxian Enforcer, obviously, but one who had left the force and joined the Decepticons before Praxus fell. It was strongly suspected that he had something to do with the destruction of the city, some inside knowledge that had allowed the Decepticons to disable the city's

defenses before the bombs fell.

Barricade wasn't particularly high in the Decepticon ranks, and seemed to function mostly as an interrogator. Several of Jazz's agents had come back the worse for wear after an encounter with the Praxian. But what did he want with Prowl? Jazz could only assume that they had known each other when they'd both been on the force, but did that make this some kind of personal vendetta? Or had Megatron taken an interest in Prowl? And why take Bluestreak as well? Opportunity, or something more? Did they want to finish what the City of Praxus had begun?

Too many unknowns. Too much to worry about. Jazz's processor was filled with terrible images. Of Prowl in chains, Barricade over him, splitting him open. Of Prowl with his belly torn open and frame grey. Of Bluestreak, crying over his carrier's offline frame. Jazz didn't recharge that night.

Chapter End Notes

Congrats to everyone who suspected Barricade

Chapter 24

Prowl came online slowly, as if through a fog. He ached, and his processor felt bogged down and slow. He tried to move, to rub at his belly, but his hands seemed to be chained in place above his head. Onlining his optics, Prowl peered up at the figure in front of him and furrowed his brow as the blurry shape resolved into something familiar. A Praxian Enforcer stood in front of him, in the dark livery of traffic control. Was he back in Praxus? His fuzzy processor struggled with the sight.

“Hello, Prowl.” The other Enforcer crouched down in front of him, a grin on his golden faceplate. “How are you feeling?”

“Unn.” Prowl lifted his heavy helm. “What was I drugged with?”

“Nothing serious, just a little something to knock you out.” The Enforcer reached out to place a hand gently on his cheek. “You’re okay now. Do you remember me?”

The thing about Enforcers is that they all looked largely the same, told apart by the serial numbers on their chests. But this Enforcer had no number. Instead, where the seal of the City of Praxus had once sat, the purple emblem of the Decepticons was displayed.

“You. Must be the one they call ‘The Traitor.’” Prowl’s processor was getting up to its usual speed, and he realized with a chill what must have happened. He had been captured. By the Decepticons. And they had sent their one Praxian to interrogate him.

The Decepticon laughed. “Is that what they call me in Iacon? Cute. But my friends call me Barricade. You might remember me as SPU 1099.”

Yes, Prowl did know that serial number. But he didn’t care. There was something far more important he needed to know. “Where is Bluestreak? What have you done with him?”

Barricade rubbed his thumb along Prowl’s cheek, though he removed his hand when Prowl snapped at him. “Your sparkling is fine. I

wouldn't dream of harming him, he'll be such an important asset for the Decepticons. Just like his carrier."

"Don't you dare touch him." Prowl snarled.

"There isn't much you can do about it." Barricade smirked. "You'll do great things for the Decepticons, and so will your creations."

"I will never work for the Decepticons." Prowl tugged at his bonds, but they held firm. "How could I ever cooperate with the mecha who destroyed our home city?"

"You, of all mecha, are upset about the loss of Praxus?" Barricade straightened and crossed his arms. "After all they did to you? Breeding you like a domestic turbohound? Stealing your sparkling away from you?"

"The common mecha of Praxus didn't deserve to suffer for the actions of the government." Prowl would never forget the smell of burning bodies as the ruins of Praxus had smoldered. No matter what had been done to him, Prowl would never condone the killing of thousands.

"The city of Praxus was corrupt to the core!" Barricade swept a hand through the air, showing anger for the first time. "I refused to be trapped there my entire existence, a slave for the crime of how I was built. The Decepticons offered me freedom. And the power to wipe the slate clean and build anew. With you, me, and our creations, we will make a new Praxus."

"Our creations?" Prowl repeated incredulously. Without the use of his arms, he curled his legs under him as if it could shield his newspaper.

"Of course! You may act cold and uptight, but you're so beautiful in your pleasure. A pity I've only seen you while drugged." Barricade leered. "But I am sure we can make new memories together."

Prowl froze. "You- when?" Because he had never interfaced publicly, the only mech who had ever seen him was Streetsmart. (And now, Jazz). At least, as far as he knew.

"Ah, I suppose you don't remember. But then, those drugs Enforcer

Command gave you were pretty strong.” Barricade shook his head. “They loved Streetsmart so much. Amazing Streetsmart, with his perfect record, loved by all. If Enforcer command knew he was out every night on his knees sucking spike for anyone with an Enforcer kink, they would’ve fired him on the spot. So, I threatened to tell them all about it, and got to spend some time with you in exchange.”

“What-“ Prowl stared in shock. He could hardly believe it, but then, after taking his drugs, he remembered very little at all. If Streetsmart had been replaced by another Enforcer, he never would have been able to tell them apart.

“I didn’t get to spark you, of course, since the medics supervised that.” Barricade said regretfully. “Why they ever thought a spike slut would make a good top, though, I’ll never know. It’s alright, we’ll have plenty of time for that now. After all, your sparklings will need a sire.”

“They have a sire!” Prowl snarled. Because, spark-donor or not, Jazz was Bluestreak’s sire, and would be one to the newspark as well.

“Who, that Polyhexian spy you’ve been staying with?” Barricade snorted. “He’ll never be able to do for you what I can. Enforcers are meant to stay within the unit.”

“You are not my unit.” Prowl growled. Because he had never had a unit. He had always been one of a kind.

“We’ll see.” Barricade bent down and brought his face in close for a kiss. Prowl bared his denta and bit down until he tasted energon on his glossa.

“Argh!” Barricade reared back, energon pouring from his torn lower lip. He struck out with one hand and slapped Prowl across the face, denting his cheek and cracking his optic. “You glitch!”

Prowl spat out a mouthful of mechblood and grinned.

“We’ll see how you feel after an evening in this cell.” Energon flowed freely down Barricade’s face and onto his chest. “I’ll be back to fuel you in a few joors. Can’t have my carrier and creation going hungry. Just remember, I have little Bluestreak too. So, you’d better cooperate.”

Barricade turned and left with a flick of his wings, the energy barrier of the cell fizzing back to life behind him. And Prowl was left alone. There were security cameras in the cell, of course, and no doubt a

guard outside, but at least Prowl was free of Barricade.

Fear and stress battered his spark. Some of it his own, some of it bleeding over from Bluestreak and the newspark. Prowl sank into the two bonds, doing his best to send comfort to his creations. Fortunately, the comm blocker on the cell block couldn't affect the spark connection.

Bluestreak, though afraid and upset, seemed to be alright physically. At least, as far as Prowl could tell. The sparkling latched onto their sparkbond, broadcasting his desperate need to have his carrier close. It hurt, so-so badly to not be able to go to his creation. Prowl sent through a calming pulse, doing his best to console Bluestreak from his cell. The sparkling was not far away, he could sense that much. Perhaps even in another cell in the brig.

The newspark shivered as well, squirming uncomfortably inside him. She had been through so much already, and she wasn't even born yet. Her and Bluestreak both had suffered so much. Prowl felt like a terrible creator. Unfortunately, feelings weren't going to get them out of there. And Prowl refused to sit in a cell and wait to be rescued. He was certain that Jazz would come for him, but had no way of predicting how long that would take. And there was no telling what Barricade would do to him and Bluestreak in the meantime.

He wanted to stay there in the bond, soothing his sparklings, but he couldn't. His spark wouldn't solve this problem, his processor would.

Reluctantly, Prowl brought his tactical processor up to full operation, and the feelings of his spark faded away. The bond to his sparklings was still there, but it didn't matter anymore. When his tactical processor took over, there was no more space for emotions. Only logic.

Though he knew that there was a comm blocker on the cell, Prowl still sent out a ping to test it. The unit was a different type than the one the Decepticons had used back at Six Lasers. Instead of preventing comms from working inside its radius, this one only kept comm messages from passing through its barrier. Comm transmissions still worked inside. It was common enough in prisons like this, since it allowed interrogators to speak to each other without their prisoner hearing.

Prowl knew exactly the style of unit they were using, but had no way of disabling it from where he was. He still couldn't send a message out

to Jazz or anyone else.

Tugging at his cuffs again, Prowl looked up and examined them. They were familiar, a modification of the style Enforcers used. Likely, the Decepticons didn't have the creds to purchase the heavy-duty type the military used. To his advantage.

He had used cuffs just like this, and he knew how they worked. They were locked and unlocked by a unique numerical code sent to the unit by comm. Theoretically, a mech could simply ping number combinations at them until they hit the correct one. Of course, there were thousands of possible combinations, and such a thing was something no ordinary mech could do. But then, Prowl was no ordinary mech.

Prowl set up a program to continuously send out possible combinations and let it run. No matter how long it took, eventually, he would stumble on the correct combo.

Joors passed, and eventually Prowl was distracted from his task by the barrier of his cell dropping. He commanded the number program to continue to run in the background, and focused the rest of his processing power on dealing with Barricade.

"Well, then, Prowl." There was a shiny silver weld mark on Barricade's lower lip, which stretched as he smirked. He twirled a cube of energon in his hand. "Hungry?"

Prowl said nothing. He was starting to get low, yes, but Barricade knew that. No need to confirm it.

"Time to fuel." Barricade knelt down and reached forward to grip Prowl's chin. "Open up."

He could refused to open his mouth, but he had no doubts that Barricade would have a backup plan for that. And besides, he needed to stay topped off. For the sake of the newspark. So instead, Prowl parted his lips and waited.

"Ah, good mech." Barricade pressed the cube to his lips and tilted it up, until fuel spilled into Prowl's mouth.

Though Prowl had agreed to it, he couldn't help but cough and sputter when the fuel hit his glossa. He had gotten so used to Jazz's delicious cooking, the gritty feeling of low-grade energon full of additives made him gag. A carrier's systems were sensitive to fuel quality, and his

wanted to reject the low-quality slop.

“Now then, none of that.” Barricade stroked Prowl’s throat gently, forcing him to swallow. His frame spasmed as he tried to reject the energon, but then the hand on his throat clamped down instead, blocking his primary fuel line.

“I’m sorry we don’t have fancy carrier fuel, but you’ll have to make do.” Barricade almost sounded regretful, before he returned the cube to Prowl’s mouth. “Now then, be a good mech and drink it all down.”

And so the process repeated, until the cube was empty and Prowl was shivering from the sick, heavy feeling in his tank.

“Our sparkling will come out big and strong.” Barricade stroked a mocking hand across Prowl’s belly, and he didn’t have the energy to kick the other mech away. “And together, we will rebuild Praxus. Once Megatron conquers the planet, everyone will be free. And we can make our city great again.”

Prowl certainly didn’t feel free, but he didn’t point out this hypocrisy. Barricade wouldn’t understand it anyway.

Eventually, the other Praxian left once again, but promised to return later for a ‘donation’. Prowl was determined to escape before that could happen. And so, the number program continued to run.

Chapter 25

It was the middle of the night when Prowl heard a soft click from the cuffs above his head. They had unlocked.

As much as Prowl wanted to pull his hands free and massage his aching wrists, he resisted. He didn't want the guard knowing he was free. There would be little point in moving anyway, since the barrier on the cell was still up. He needed it to be taken down.

Time to implement the next step of his plan. Prowl let the cover to his valve slide open, and turned his thoughts to other things. Things that would make him hot and wet. Like Jazz's hands on his frame, stroking down his thighs and up his sides. Fingers circling his anterior node and a hot glossa on his headlights.

Prowl had never imagined that interfacing could feel good. But Jazz was always considerate, and so attentive. He had never done a single thing that Prowl didn't want, and seemed to know just how to make Prowl feel amazing. Now that Prowl knew the joy of consensual interface, he would never let that choice be taken from him again.

Phantom fingers danced over his seams, drawing fire in their wake. Prowl let himself sink into the fantasy, imagining that smooth, accented voice praising him in between soft kisses. It was made a little awkward by the fact that his hands were still cuffed above his head, but for some reason it was also kind of. Exciting? To be at the mercy of Jazz, unable to reciprocate. Perhaps, it would be something to investigate once he was back with his boyfriend.

Gradually, lubricant began to drip from his valve to puddle on the floor. He could feel the dampness on his thighs and under his aft. Perfect.

Reluctantly, Prowl pulled himself back to reality. There was no Jazz, only him, alone, in a Deception cell.

He would need another memory for the next step. An older one, of pain and fear. Prowl called up the memory files of when he'd gone into emergence with Bluestreak, trying to remember the building

agony of the contractions and the anxiety of being escorted to the medical wing as his frame worked to rip itself apart.

Venting in deeply, Prowl primed his vocalizer and *screamed*. He made the sound as raw and primal as possible. His vocalizer crackled as he screamed again, the sound echoing off the walls of the cell.

A guard appeared on the other side of the cell barrier, banging his fist on the wall. “Hey, what’s all that noise?”

Internally, Prowl grinned. No one wanted to stand guard in the middle of the dark cycle, so it was often a task given to the most junior staff. A low-ranked nobody without the clout to fight for a better shift.

There was no time to celebrate, though. He had a role to play.

“The sparkling-“ Prowl gasped. “The sparkling is coming!”

“W-what?” The Decepticon guard looked him over, and Prowl made sure to lean back a little to show off the puddle under him to help sell the act.

“My sparkling, please-!” Prowl squeezed his optics shut until tears formed at the corners and arched his back as if in terrible pain. “Aahh!”

The guard dropped the cell barrier and ran inside, dropping to his knees next to the prisoner. “Primus! What do I-?”

He never finished the question. Prowl ripped his hands free from the cuffs and brought them down onto the guard’s helm, knocking him unconscious.

Panting, Prowl looked down at the limp Decepticon. After a moment’s hesitation, he hooked a claw under the mech’s primary energon line in his throat and ripped it free. One less Decepticon to worry about.

Slowly, Prowl climbed to his pedes. He was shaky, but after a moment felt steady enough to try and walk. Between the limp caused by his damaged leg and the waddle created by his increased weight, he wouldn’t be quick, but he would have to try.

Leaving the cell, Prowl looked around the brig. It was small, with only a few cells. The ones he could see into were empty. He must be in a small satellite base.

In the cell closest to the guard station, Prowl found what he was looking for. On top of the berth inside of the cell was a padded crate. And inside that crate was his sparkling. He had to get into the cell. But how? He didn't know the access code, and hacking the lock would take too long.

At the guard station, Prowl saw something that made him pause. The contents of his subspace were spread across a table. He scooped up the scans of the newspark and stuffed them back into his subspace, then hefted his acid pellet rifle. It was still loaded, with a $\frac{3}{4}$ charge.

Turning back to the cell, Prowl flipped through different optical filters until he spotted what he was looking for. A pulse of energy in the walls, indicating the main power line energizing the barrier on the cell. Training his rifle on the spot, Prowl fired. The acid quickly ate a hole into the wall and into the wiring underneath. With a fizzle, the energy barrier on the cell flickered and died.

"Bluestreak!" Prowl hurried inside and lifted the sparkling from the crate.

Bluestreak instantly latched onto his carrier, tears pouring freely from his optics. Concerningly, though, he made absolutely no noise aside from the hitching of his vents. Prowl did his best to examine the sparkling's throat, but could see no damage. Presumably, someone had gotten tired of Bluestreak's crying and manually shut off his vocalizer.

Though he felt like a terrible creator, Prowl decided to leave it off. Hiding would be made easier if Bluestreak was silent. Once they escaped, he could make it up to the sparkling.

Carefully, Prowl pried Bluestreak from his chestplate and lifted him over his shoulder instead. The sparkling was quick to hunker down between Prowl's wings, mag'ing on so tightly it was like he was trying to merge with Prowl's dorsal plating.

Prowl did his best to send a pulse of comfort to his sparkling before re-focusing on his goal. Exiting the brig, Prowl kept all of his sensors primed and his rifle armed and ready. He prayed he wouldn't encounter any Decepticons, but he would be prepared if he did.

As soon as Prowl cleared the range of the comm blocker, he activated his gps and sent up a ping to the nearest satellite. The results made his spark fall. Though he wasn't terribly far from Iacon, the base was still solidly inside Decepticon territory and separated from the Autobot city by a wide stretch of wastes and slums. It was a long way to travel for

a mech who couldn't transform, couldn't run, could barely even walk.

It was highly unlikely he'd be able to escape and make his own way back to Iacon. A better course of action would be to find a secure hiding place and send out a message to Jazz for rescue.

As quietly as possible, Prowl crept through the halls of the small Decepticon base. The walls were streaked with rust, and liquid dripped from a cracked pipe overhead to puddle on the floor. The dank smell of must permeated the place. Prowl read the labels on the doors, looking for a decent place to hide, and hoped he didn't come down with an infection.

There was a door labelled 'Fuel Storage.' It had a simple lock on the door, to keep out sneakthieves and starving grunts. Prowl produced a cable from his wrist and jacked in, making short work of the encryption. The door slid open reluctantly, sticking in its tracks, before revealing a small room full of stacked energon cubes. Perfect. The energon would help hide their energy signature, and provide something to hide behind. Prowl erased any evidence of his presence from the lock, and let the door slide shut behind him.

Reluctantly, Prowl set down his rifle so that he would have both hands free and set about shifting around the energon cubes. Carefully stacking and restacking the pallet all the way in the very back, until there was a small space that Prowl could crawl into. Dragging his rifle in behind him, Prowl blocked the gap with an energon cube and vented softly. He had a small gap he could look out through, allowing him to see a sliver of the door, and it was just big enough to poke the muzzle of his rifle out through if need be. Otherwise, no one coming into the room would be able to see him.

There was barely enough room in Prowl's little hidey-hole to cross his legs in front of him. He did so with some difficulty, trying to get a least a little comfortable. He finally gave into the urge to cradle his belly, sending apologies to his newspark through their bond. She kicked uncomfortably inside him, as if to punish him for all the stress he'd put her through.

"I'm sorry." Prowl whispered. "Be strong for a little longer."

Taking a chance, Prowl accessed his comm unit and sent out a brief message. Protected by a basic encryption, Prowl listed his gps coordinates before sending it off to Jazz. Then he turned off his comm, to help keep the Decepticons from tracing him. Now, there was little

to do but wait.

All at once, exhaustion came over Prowl. He had gotten used to recharging frequently, whenever he wanted and for however long he wanted. His frame was tired, begging him to recharge. He couldn't. If he shut down, there was no telling what might happen. He had to stay awake, stay vigilant. Fortunately, he had mods from his Enforcer days that could overpower recharge protocols. Activating them, the exhaustion was wiped away to be replaced by a jittery, artificial energy. He would pay for this later, no doubt, but as long as he had a 'later' at all, it would be worth it.

Bluestreak shifted against his back, and Prowl reached a hand over his shoulder to help guide the sparkling back over to his front. Dried tear tracks covered Bluestreak's face, and he rubbed his nose against his carrier's chest plating as his systems whined softly in distress. He was probably hungry. Who knew if the Decepticons had fed him, or what they had fed him. Judging by the quality of the swill Barricade had force-fed Prowl, it was doubtful that they had any sparkling grade handy.

Of course, neither did Prowl. Though they were surrounded by energon, he could tell it was the same awful low-grade that he had been fed in the cell. It could potentially damage Bluestreak's immature systems, making him sick or even requiring a tank pump. No, Prowl couldn't risk feeding Bluestreak from this stuff. But he couldn't starve his sparkling either. What could he possibly do?

Bluestreak nuzzled Prowl's chest armor harder, rooting against the hard surface, and all at once, Prowl's chest felt hot and tight. He shifted uncomfortably, before letting his armor slide open. Oh, right. His auxiliary fueling system had been turned on. His pouches were full and swollen, but was he actually producing? He wasn't supposed to actually start lactating until after emergence, that's what the carrying texts said.

Experimentally, Prowl pinched one of his nozzles and watched as a bit of energon squirted out. Then, he lifted Bluestreak to his breast and did his best to guide the sparkling to a nozzle. Fortunately, Bluestreak knew what to do and latched on eagerly. Energon flowed, and Prowl sighed softly. If not for the horrible circumstances, he could imagine that this might feel nice. For now, he was just glad it was working at all.

He should probably keep himself topped off, as well, if he was going

to be fuelling Bluestreak. Prowl lifted one of the energon cubes that made up his shelter and examined it critically. It would make him sick, but his systems would be able to handle it far better than Bluestreak's. Ripping the top off the cube, Prowl gulped it down. His frame immediately spasmed, wanting to reject the fuel, but Prowl clamped his mouth shut and kept it down through sheer force of will. After a few kliks, the shakes stopped for the most part. He would survive.

One arm cradled Bluestreak to his chest, while the other stayed on his rifle, which was trained on the door. All his sensors were turned up to maximum, primed to hear the slightest noise or movement. Hopefully, Jazz would come for them soon.

Chapter 26

Jazz was a ball of frustration. Though Blaster had successfully tracked how Barricade had gotten into and back out of Iacon (and that was a security issue that was immediately getting fixed), he had no luck figuring out where the Decepticon had gone next. Once he had left Iacon, followed by a convoy no doubt carrying Prowl and Bluestreak, he had disappeared into Decepticon-held territory. Jazz hadn't yet heard back from any of his agents on the ground, and now he was stuck in a meeting with the slagging Generals trying to explain why he had mobilized so many Autobot resources.

"I don't see why we should devote so much resources to a single mech and a sparkling." One of the grizzled old mecha growled. "We should be concentrating on where the Decepticons will attack next."

"He's not just some mech!" Jazz slammed a fist down on the table. "Their designations are Prowl and Bluestreak!"

"The Decepticons appear to be mounting an incursion into Tetrahex, your agents should be gathering intelligence on that!" Another general demanded. "I understand you have become attached to these Praxians, but--"

"Enough!" Optimus suddenly demanded, his deep voice silencing everyone else at the table. "This is an innocent mech and two sparklings we are talking about. I will not allow the Decepticons to hurt one more innocent mech if there is anything I can do about it, much less a carrier and his two creations. If we do nothing to rescue Prowl and Bluestreak, then we cannot call ourselves Autobots."

Suitably cowed, the generals looked down at the table and said nothing.

"Now then, I'm waiting to hear back from some of my agents on where Barricade might have holed up. He doesn't seem to be at any of the main Decepticon bases, but--" Jazz paused when he received a comm message. Normally, he would ignore the ping while he was in a meeting, but it was the sender that caught his attention. Because the ping was from Prowl.

“Jazz, are you alright?” Optimus leaned forward in concern.

“I just received a message from Prowl.” Eagerly, Jazz opened the text ping and read it. The message was simple. It read ‘In Hiding’ and contained a set of GPS coordinates. As much as he wanted to respond, he refrained. If Prowl really was hiding out, too much comm chatter could give him away.

“From Prowl?” Optimus asked in surprise. “What does it say?”

“It’s just a set of coordinates.” Jazz entered the lat and long into his gps and looked it up. “He’s in the outskirts of Tarn on the other side of the Wastes.”

“Have you considered that this is probably a trap?” One of the Generals tapped his digits on the table, a frown on his weathered face.

“It’s a chance I’ll take.” Jazz wasn’t going to sit on his aft one klik longer. “By your leave, sirs.”

“Dismissed, Jazz.” Optimus said before any of the Generals could protest. “Keep me updated, please.”

“You got it, Bossbot!” Jazz saluted before dashing out, sending out summons to every agent he had on base. It was time to go do what he did best.

As much as Jazz wanted to march on the base and bust in, guns blazing, it would be a good way to get not only Prowl, but probably the entire strike team killed. Bringing down a full Autobot contingent on a base inside Decepticon territory would just get retaliation from the main Decepticon forces.

This would have to be a hit and run. Get in, rescue Prowl and Bluestreak, and get back out as quickly as possible. Preferably taking out Barricade in the process. Hopefully, Jazz would get a chance to drag home the Decepticon Praxian for some *quality time*, but he would settle for putting a knife through the bastard’s spark.

Before anything, though, they needed to get an accurate map of the base, figure out how many Decepticons were on scene, and definitively locate Prowl and Bluestreak. A job for the sneaks.

Fortunately, he did have an agent in the area. Jazz immediately sent

out a secure message to Counterpunch and commanded him to find his way to the Decepticon Base. Then he called in Mirage, Hound, and Quickshadow, the only assets he had currently available in Iacon, and set out for the Wastes.

The group travelled on wheels, either in Decepticon disguise paint or (in Mirage's case) invisible. The stretch of no-mech's land between Iacon and Tarn was pockmarked with craters from countless aerial bombardments and battles, and inhabited by starving Empties who wouldn't hesitate to rip apart a living mech for fuel and parts.

Flying would be faster and easier, but the Decepticons would shoot out of the sky anything that entered Tarn airspace without a Decepticon ID. So on wheels they would stay. Jazz did have a shuttle on standby, for a quick evac, though the difficult part would be getting back out of Tarn with Prowl and Bluestreak for a pickup. Even assuming Prowl wasn't injured, he could still barely walk on his own and couldn't transform. If he *was* injured, well. . . Ratchet would deploy out with the shuttle if needed.

Hopefully, he was okay. Hopefully, the newspark was okay too. The last thing they needed was Prowl going into early emergence. Not after they'd both survived so much.

And Bluestreak. The poor bitlet had really been having a horrible time of it. He deserved all the treats, toys, and cuddles he could tolerate as soon as Jazz had him back. If the Decepticons had hurt him in any way, there was no where they would be safe from Jazz.

It took some guile and postering to get through the border of Tarn, but finally, Jazz's team was safely ensconced in a run-down shack not far from the coordinates Prowl had sent him. So close, he was so close.

The unfortunate thing about small bases is that one couldn't simply sneak in and blend with the masses. No doubt, Barricade or whoever else was running the show would notice if a few new Decepticons waltzed into the place. Jazz wanted to be the one to case the place, to find Prowl and rescue him, but he would have to delegate. Mirage would go in, using his Outlier ability to investigate the layout of the place, while Jazz waited to hear from Counterpunch.

Sitting on the partially collapsed couch, Jazz's leg jiggled with uncontrollable impatience as he waited to get a ping. Quickshadow looked out one of the grimy windows at the streets below, while Hound came over to sit beside Jazz.

"I'm sure they're fine." Hound said softly. "Mirage will find them."

"They'd better be." Jazz growled, arms crossed over his chest. "Or I'll tear Barricade apart into his component pieces and keep his spark chamber as a decoration on my desk."

"Prowl's tough." Hound reassured him. "From everything you've told me about him, I know he wouldn't go down without a fight. Or let anyone hurt his creations."

Jazz's comm suite pinged and he heaved himself up off the couch. "That's Counterpunch. I'll be back soon."

Leaving the hab, Jazz adopted a self-assured swagger that would ensure that he blend in amongst the Decepticons on the street and kept a sharp optic out for a certain blue agent of his.

"Oi, Meister!" A rough voice called him over to the shadow of a rusted building. Counterpunch leaned against the wall casually, as if he hadn't a care in the world. "Fancy seeing you here."

"Ay, Counterpunch." Jazz put out a fist for a fist-bump. "What're you doing in this part of Tarn?"

"Ahh, got assigned to whatever that Praxian bastard is up to." Counterpunch shrugged casually. "Claims to be doing something big for Lord Megatron. But he's still stuck out here and not in Darkmount, so can't be that important, right?"

"Haha, yeah." Jazz forced out a laugh. "What's he got you doing?"

"Apparently, Barricade kidnapped some poor aft and a sparkling from Iacon and lost him. Killed a guard, escaped, now they're tearing the base apart trying to find him." Counterpunch snorted. "Who would've guessed some sparked up carrier could be so sneaky. Barricade's got, like, 25 guys on base searching."

Go Prowl. "Sounds like a mess. Well, good luck with that." Jazz held out a hand and pressed palms with Counterpunch. As he did, he felt a small chit pass into his hand. Then, the two went their separate ways.

Jazz was hardly able to wait to get back to the hab before he inserted the chit into his wrist port and scanned it. A map of the base. Good work, Counterpunch.

The door closed behind Jazz seemingly on its own, and he turned in

anticipation. “Mirage, report.”

The spy flickered into view. “Barricade’s searching furiously for Prowl. He hasn’t found him yet, but if the coordinates you were sent are right, he’s still on base somewhere. I couldn’t search every room, but I did narrow down to a few likely places. We don’t have much time before Barricade decides to call in reinforcements from Darkmount, though.”

“Alright.” Jazz projected the map he had been given onto the wall. “Here’s the base. Mirage, anything to add?”

Mirage filled in some gaps and overlaid the air vents and crawl spaces. “They’ve been concentrating their search on the lower levels. Barricade seems convinced Prowl would’ve gone down into the underlayers. There’s still a few rooms that have only gotten a cursory search, though, so I think we should start there.”

Suddenly, Jazz wished Prowl was there. The Praxian strategist would know just what to do, he was sure. “We strike at midnight.”

The other three Autobots nodded. “Yes sir.”

Though no base was totally unmanned at night, hopefully the majority of the crew would be in recharge. The team of four Autobot spies crawled in through the entrance that Mirage had discovered earlier, then split up to search. They had to be fast. Barricade had his team on high alert with Prowl’s escape, stealth paint or not, the spies would eventually be noticed.

Jazz slunk through a storage room, carefully checking every nook and cranny, before declaring the room clear and moving on to the next. Where could you be, Prowl?

::Meister!:: A call came in through a secure line from Quickshadow. ::I found the target.::

::You have them?:: Jazz started briskly for Quickshadow’s location.

::Fuel storage room, sub-level one.:: Quickshadow confirmed. ::I got shot at when I tried to approach, I think it best if you respond, sir.::

::Good work, Slipchain.:: Jazz opened a line to his other two agents. ::Sniffer, meet me at room F-2, sub-level one. Lieger, start rigging this

place up.::

It made Jazz feel better that Prowl was armed, and coherent enough to shoot at someone approaching. Reaching the storage room, Jazz nodded to Quickshadow before slipping inside.

As a place to hide out, this was a good choice. The fuel stacked inside made it impossible to sense any spark signatures, and the glowing cubes effectively hid the shape of any mech hiding inside. As Jazz approached the far back corner of the room, there was the soft ‘thum’ of a weapon firing, and Jazz danced to the side as an acid pellet shot past where his helm had just been.

“Prowl!” Jazz hissed as loudly as he dared. “It’s me. It’s Jazz.”

“Jazz?” A familiar voice whispered. There was movement, and a blue optic peered out through a small gap in the stacks of energon.

“Yeah, babe. It’s me.” Jazz nearly collapsed in relief. He started shifting energon cubes. “Bluestreak with you?”

“He is.” Slowly, Prowl became visible behind the wall he’d made. His rifle rested against his knees, and Bluestreak was curled against his chest. The poor sparkling was in recharge, probably exhausted from the ordeal.

“I’ve got some of my agents here with me.” Jazz reached down to help pull Prowl to his pedes. The Praxian was wobbly, but found his balance after a moment and managed to limp out of the storage room without leaning too heavily on Jazz. “Hound will disguise you both with his holograms. He can carry you.”

“I will walk.” Prowl said stubbornly.

“Prowl-“

“I. Will. Walk.” Prowl repeated.

It wasn’t worth arguing over. Jazz passed Prowl off to Hound, watching with careful optics how the Praxian leaned on the sturdy scout. Bluestreak was securely magnetized to his chest, and he still held his rifle at the ready in his free hand. Jazz opened a comm line to Mirage, to check on the progress of planting all the explosives they’d brought to blow the base, when he was interrupted by a voice.

“You won’t be taking him!”

Jazz spun around to see his nemesis at the end of the darkened hall.
“Barricade.”

“You look like that Polyhexian spy my Prowl shackled up with.”
Barricade stalked forward, a pistol appearing in his hands. “Leave him with me, and maybe I’ll kill you quickly.”

It burned Jazz up to hear the bastard call Prowl ‘his.’ “Hound, Prowl, get out of here.” He commanded, tugging his knives from the holsters in his forearms.

A dozen holograms of Hound and Prowl appeared around them, all heading off in different directions, but Jazz only had optics for Barricade. Without another moment’s hesitation, he lunged forward.

Quickly, he had covered the ground between them and was too close for Barricade’s ranged weapon. With a snarl, the Praxian was forced to throw it aside and grapple Jazz hand to hand. He was good. Very good. But Jazz was better.

“I’m going to make you regret kidnapping Prowl.” Jazz swore as he stabbed one knife deep into a sensor wing.

Barricade howled, “He’s mine, and he always has been!”

“He doesn’t belong to anybody!” Jazz wrapped a hand around the damaged sensor wing and pulled with all his strength. There was a satisfying ripping sound, and with a spray of energon, the appendage came free.

Now Barricade *screamed*, and the sound fed the rage burning in Jazz’s spark. He would kill the Decepticon right here, right now.

An explosion shook the base, and Jazz was nearly knocked off his pedes. Clearly, Mirage had gotten his work done a little early. And at just the wrong time.

Taking advantage of his distraction, Barricade dropped into alt-mode and sped off, swerving wildly with one side-panel missing before disappearing into the smoke starting to fill the halls. With a roar of anger, Jazz spun and dashed off after Hound and Prowl. As much as he wanted to hunt down Barricade, he had something more important to take care of first. He did pause long enough to subpace the wing he’d ripped off, though. He wasn’t leaving without some sort of consolation prize.

Outside the base, an enormous Decepticon tank shambling along was the disguise shielding Hound and Prowl from view. Quickshadow marched in front of them, still in her disguise paint, with a glare that promised death to anyone that approached. Fortunately, the explosions ripping apart the base behind them were serving as sufficient distraction, and no one was paying much attention to them.

There wasn't much time to talk. Only to walk, heading for the border of Tarn and away from the Decepticon stronghold. They were keeping up a fair pace, which meant either Prowl had given in and was being carried, or he would be in for a pit of a lecture from Ratchet later.

As soon as they successfully cleared the border, Jazz pinged for their evac. Fortunately, Galaxy Shuttle wasted no time and was overhead in under a joor. Mirage had met back up with them by then, and the group was able to get aboard and get airborne again quickly.

Finally, Hound dropped his hologram and Jazz was able to get a good look at Prowl. The mech was clearly exhausted, and fine tremors ran through his frame. Bluestreak had woken up, and was crying silently in a way that deeply concerned Jazz.

"You really okay?" Jazz came over to put a hand on Prowl's shoulder.

"You came for us." Prowl's normally sharp blue optics were dim, and his focusing array was struggling to stay on Jazz's face.

"Yeah, Prowl. I did." Jazz gave him a smile through the tears of relief starting to run down his face. "And I always will."

"T-thank-" Prowl shuddered, and his blue optics abruptly went black. His frame stiffened, before going fully limp as he slumped over onto Jazz.

"Prowl!" Jazz frantically pushed the Praxian back upright, patting his face, but Prowl remained firmly unresponsive.

Ratchet was immediately there, cabling into his patient. Jazz watched anxiously, but after a few kliks, the old medic's face relaxed a little. "The stress triggered his glitch, and he crashed. He'll be alright once we get him back to a hospital and he has a chance to recover a little. I'll make sure he gets the best treatment."

"Thank goodness." Jazz wrapped his arms around Prowl, squashing Bluestreak between their spark chambers. He had his mechs back. Thank Primus. He hadn't been too late.

Chapter 27

Prowl came back to awareness slowly. It was like a blanket was wrapped around his processor, and it took a little while to peel it back and return to full functioning. He was laying down on his back, semi-reclined, on a comfortable surface. The only sound was the soft, regular beeping of a machine nearby, the smell of a sterile room and disinfectant. He was in a hospital.

It took real effort to get his heavy optical shutters to rise, more to make his optical arrays focus. A plain, white hospital room swam into view. Prowl's helm tilted to the side, to see the medical monitor at his berthside. The screen was displaying two sparkbeats. His own, slow and steady, and the faster pace of the newspark below it. Though his arm felt leaden, Prowl managed to raise it to rest a hand on the lower curve of his belly. The newspark shifted under his touch, a pede pressing out against his protoform as she turned in her recharge.

"Prowl?"

Turning his helm the other way, Prowl caught sight of Jazz, seated in a chair next to his berth. Bluestreak was curled up in his lap, recharging quietly.

"Jazz?" Prowl's voice was scratchy and soft. He groaned softly, the soreness of his frame beginning to make itself known. "How long have I been out?"

"Only two cycles." Jazz carefully leaned closer, doing his best not to disturb the sparkling in his lap as he reached forward to take Prowl's free hand. "How are you feeling?"

"Like I've been run over by a convoy." Prowl groaned, shifting slightly. Every part of him ached.

"Yeah, Ratch said you might feel like scrap for a bit. He had to pump your tank and flush out your fuel lines." Jazz rubbed his thumb comfortingly over the back of Prowl's hand. "That slag the Decepticons call fuel did a number you."

"I have grown far too used to your cooking." Prowl gave Jazz a tired smile.

“Well, don’t worry. You can have plenty more of it.” Jazz chuckled.

“Is Bluestreak alright?” Prowl was reassured by the fact that his sparkling was with Jazz, instead of in a hospital bed beside him, but he wanted to make sure.

“He’s fine.” Jazz stroked a hand over the sparkling’s helm. “The only thing wrong with him was his voice, but turning it back on was a simple process. He’s going to be pretty clingy for awhile, though.”

That was about as Prowl expected. Poor Bluestreak. He hadn’t been physically injured, but the mental scars would likely take longer to heal.

Jazz looked at him with a serious expression, worry plain on his face. “I have to know. Did. Did Barricade do anything to you?”

“No. I did not give him the opportunity.” Prowl shuddered to think of all the things Barricade had likely wanted to do to him. And to Bluestreak. “I trusted that you would come for us, but I did not want to stay in that cell at his mercy.”

“Primus, I’m so glad.” Jazz slumped a little relief. “And I would’ve had a pit of a time tracking down Barricade without that message from you. You did a great job. I have to know, though, did you know Barricade? From Praxus?”

“I did not remember him. He was just another anonymous Enforcer working in Traffic. But he remembers me.” Prowl hesitated, wondering if he should divulge what he had learned. “I found out that Barricade was blackmailing my stud, Streetsmart, to take over sessions with me.”

“You don’t mean-“ Jazz’s visor flashed.

“Barricade has interfaced with me. I don’t know how many times, after taking my drugs, I couldn’t tell him and Streetsmart apart.” Prowl admitted. “He did not spark me, that part was always supervised by the medics. But, I believe part of why he kidnapped me is because he wanted to.”

“That piece of rusted slag!” Jazz growled, only managing to throttle back his engine when Bluestreak stirred in his lap. “Wish I’d gotten more than just his wing.”

“You took one of his wings?” Prowl vaguely remembered Jazz facing

off against Barricade as he and Hound escaped the base, but didn't know what the result of the fight had been.

"Ripped it right off." Jazz confirmed with a grin. "Just sorry it wasn't his spark chamber."

"Considering how difficult it was for me to get new wings built, I imagine it will be a long time before the Decepticons can make him a new one." That was satisfying enough for Prowl, to know that Barricade was out there missing a wing. There would be time to kill the rogue Praxian another cycle, he was sure.

"So," Jazz said softly. "He isn't their sire?"

"Both of my sparklings have only one sire." Prowl looked Jazz right in the visor as earnestly as he could. "You."

Jazz gave a little gasp. "W-what?."

"You are their sire. To Bluestreak, and to the newspark." Prowl said firmly. "If you will claim them."

"Oh, Prowl. Of course I will." Jazz stroked Bluestreak's back softly, getting a sleepy chirp from the sparkling. "I promise to be the best sire there ever was."

"I believe in you." Prowl said honestly. "Whatever I need to sign to have you legally listed as Bluestreak's sire, I will."

Jazz pulled a face. "Well, actually, legally I adopted Bluestreak. We should probably get all that datawork corrected, since you're actually alive and all. I'll get someone on that."

"Good." Prowl nodded, one hand stroking his belly gently. "And you'll be on the newspark's forging certificate too."

"Thank you, Prowl. That means a lot to me." A grin spread across Jazz's face. "I love her with all I have."

"I know." And Prowl did. He could see it in everything Jazz did. "And. While I was waiting there in the Decepticon base. I thought of a name."

"Did you?" Jazz sounded excited.

"What do you think. Of Strongarm?" There in the dark storage room, feeling her nudging at his internals, so incredibly alive despite all that

had happened-. It had finally come to him.

"I think that's a great name for her." Jazz placed his free hand over Prowl's, on the curve of the newspark, to feel her kick.

They stayed like that for a few klicks, when Bluestreak let out a peep. He had woken up. Jazz scooped him up and set him on Prowl's thighs. "Hear that, Baby Blue? Your sister has a name now. Strongarm."

"Ooo!" Bluestreak patted his hands on his carrier's belly and draped himself over the curved protoform.

Prowl let out a little laugh, shaking Bluestreak, who giggled in response. Hearing the sparkling's voice just buoyed Prowl's spark even more.

There was a warning knock on the door to the hospital room before Ratchet stepped inside. The weathered old medic smiled when he saw that Prowl was awake. "Good, you're up. How do you feel?"

"Sore." Prowl said truthfully. "Everything aches."

"Is it a sharp pain, or dull?" Ratchet questioned, looking over Prowl's vitals on the monitor.

"Dull." Though it was irritating, Prowl had felt far worse pain in his life.

"Good. I can't give you any stronger painkillers because of the sparkling." Seeming satisfied with his readings, Ratchet put aside his datapad. "Are you feeling well enough to be up for awhile, or do you need me to put you back into recharge?"

"I am fine." He was sore, yes, but it was tolerable.

"I have someone here who would like to take your statement on the kidnapping. Do you want to do that now, or should I have the come back later?"

"I will do that now." Best to get it over with.

"Do you want me to step out?" Jazz offered.

"You do not need to, as you will probably hear it all anyway." Considering Jazz was a commander, Prowl had no doubt the information would make it to him one way or another.

“Alright.” Jazz gently took Bluestreak back, and settled back in his chair as the door to the treatment room opened once again, and a familiar Praxian stepped in.

“Hey, Prowl.” Smokescreen greeted. “You feeling alright?”

“Fine.” Prowl watched as Ratchet stepped out, and turned his full attention to Smokescreen. “You are here to take my statement?”

“Yep.” Smokescreen pulled out a datapad to take notes on. “Tell me everything you can remember. No detail is too unimportant.”

Prowl had once been an Enforcer, giving official statements was something he could do. And so he recounted every detail of his kidnapping, from the moment he had realized something was wrong, to when he had boarded the shuttle out of Tarn. He skimmed no details, except for the part where he had fantasized about Jazz fragging him to make his valve lubricate. Smokescreen didn’t need to know about that. He glazed over that part, but otherwise left nothing out.

He could speak of his imprisonment clinically, without emotion, but he still felt tired when the tale was done. Smokescreen had a good poker face, and simply made a few extra notations on his datapad, while Jazz was visibly trying to keep himself under control. Perhaps, Prowl should’ve let the story be filtered before Jazz had to hear it. Though it was reassuring to know that his partner was angry for him, had feared for him, Prowl regretted causing him much stress.

“Thank you, Prowl.” Smokescreen nodded and put away his notes. “I’m sorry this happened. I should’ve stayed with you-“

“It is not your fault. Iacon seemed safe.” Prowl blamed no one for what had happened, except Barricade and the Decepticons.

“If you ever come back to the meetings, we’ll escort you. We won’t leave you alone again.” Smokescreen promised, before walking out to take his notes to the Autobot commanders.

“Primus.” Jazz dropped his head once they were alone again. Bluestreak was making grabby hands and insistent noises in Prowl’s direction, so Jazz plopped the sparkling back in his carrier’s lap. “I’m so sorry, Prowl. I should’ve been with you-“

“You have duties to attend to with the Autobots.” Just as Prowl didn’t blame Smokescreen or his other friends, he did not blame Jazz. “It

will sometimes mean leaving us by ourselves. I do not wish to pull you away from your work.”

“I won’t let this happen again.” Jazz swore.

And he said it so confidently, that Prowl actually believed him.

Though he had claimed he felt fine, now that he had finished recounting his experience, tiredness dragged at Prowl. Soon enough, he was slipping back into recharge.

When next Prowl awoke, he had another visitor come in to see him. An important one.

“Optimus Prime, sir.” Prowl felt like he should do something, anything, but couldn’t even really manage to sit up. He instead adjusted his berth to bring him more upright, to properly greet his leader.

“It’s alright, Prowl.” Optimus had Bluestreak in his lap, bouncing the sparkling on his knee. “I’m just glad to know that you and Bluestreak are alright. I saw Smokescreen’s notes. What you did was quite incredible.”

“I simply did what I saw was necessary.” Prowl didn’t think of his actions as noble or something to be admired. He was just trying to keep his sparklings safe.

“Still. I was so glad to hear that Jazz had successfully recovered you, and that Barricade did not have a chance to do anything.” Optimus retracted the mask that sat over his face, better to show off his gentle smile. “If you ever need anything, please, do not hesitate to contact me.”

Prowl couldn’t help but stare. The Prime of Cybertron himself, here at his berthside, offering his own resources to a simple cold-constructed mech.

“Well.” It took a klik for Prowl to come up with something to say. “I have been offering my counsel on notes Jazz has been bringing me, but I have noticed my opinions are not being paid attention to. If you could put some weight behind my notes-“

“So you’re the reason Jazz has been so vocal at Command meetings. I

should've guessed." Fortunately, Optimus didn't seem angry that Jazz had been sharing command-level notes with him. "I will do what I can. But please, focus on your recovery, and your creations. The war will wait."

Prowl certainly didn't think that the war would wait, but he would take what he could get. "Thank you sir."

When Prowl was discharged from the hospital to recover under Jazz's care at home, it was the Prime himself who came to transport him with his trailer. Prowl was rendered speechless. How could such an important mech care about him so much? To act as a personal chauffeur to someone so far below his station?

Jazz's apartment. . . no, their apartment, was familiar and comforting. Nothing had changed in the cycles he had been gone. Prowl was stationed in his usual spot on the couch, a blanket draped over him and Bluestreak at his side. The vidscreen was turned on, and he felt at home again.

Chapter 28

“Come on, Prowl, just a little bit more.” Jazz crooned softly as he held Prowl tight, rutting gently into his Praxian partner.

Prowl panted into the pillows of their berth, fists clenched around the blankets as he rocked in time with Jazz’s thrusts. He had been okayed by Ratchet to interface, but had been sternly told to “lay back and make Jazz do all the work.” That was fine, Jazz didn’t mind.

Though Prowl had a couple of decacycles left in his carriage, Ratchet had also said it wouldn’t be a surprise if Strongarm came early. Premature emergence wasn’t uncommon after stressful carriages, and this one had definitely counted. So Jazz was determined to make sure their newspark was ready, and that meant giving Prowl as much transfluid as he could hold. Not such a hard task, really, though it was made slightly more difficult by how clingy Bluestreak had been lately.

But Bluestreak had managed to stay in recharge when placed into his crib, so his creators were taking full advantage of having a little time to themselves.

“J-Jazz.” Prowl panted softly. “I- I’m going to-“

“Let it happen, babe.” Jazz held onto Prowl through both of their overloads, cradling him until the aftershocks slowly faded. As usual, Prowl had been knocked into recharge.

Jazz cleaned up their mess, then settled into the berth beside his partner. Prowl was warm and limp against him, the firm swell of his belly pressing into Jazz’s abdomen. Their sparkling. Safe and growing between them.

There was a little kick, and Jazz rubbed a soothing hand over Prowl’s swollen protoform. “Shhh, Strongarm. You’re okay. Let your Ri Ri recharge, hmm?”

Strongarm seemed to settle down at that, and Jazz let himself drift into recharge.

Sometime later, Jazz was woken by movement in the berth next to him. His mods roused him quickly, but after the initial knee-jerk moment of panic, he calmed down. It was, of course, only Prowl.

"You alright, Prowl?" Jazz murmured, rubbing his partner's shoulder as Prowl shifted uncomfortably. "Getting kicked?"

"No." Prowl said softly, slowly maneuvering himself into a sitting position. His cheeks were flushed, and his field felt faintly embarrassed. "I'm hungry."

Jazz chuckled. "Well then, I guess we should take care of that."

"I will be fine—"

"Please, let me feed my partner and our creation." Jazz got a little thrill every time he got to say 'our creation.' It felt good to be able to put his claim on Prowl and Strongarm. "I'll go see what I've got in the kitchen. You craving anything in particular?"

Prowl hesitated, before admitting. "Anything with gold."

That was good. When a carrier was craving gold, it usually meant that the newspark's processor wiring was being formed. Jazz was pretty sure he had some gold swirl jellied energon in the fridge.

Retrieving said snack, Jazz returned to the berthroom and handed over the tub, along with the spoon. "Here ya go."

"Thank you." Prowl said softly, digging in with a satisfied little hum. His wings gave a happy twitch, and Jazz couldn't help but smile.

"Anything for two of my favorite mecha." Jazz rejoined him under the covers and cuddled up to his side. "You need anything else?"

"No, I am fine. I was just- well. Cravings." Prowl seemed rather embarrassed to admit it. "I am sorry to wake you."

"I don't mind, really." Jazz reassured him, rubbing a hand up and down Prowl's back between his wings. "Your frame needs what it needs. I'll do anything to make sure you and the bit are healthy."

"You are doing an admirable job." Prowl's vents hitched, and Jazz was alarmed to see cleanser fluid gather at the corners of his optics.

"You alright, Prowl?" He asked in concern.

“Yes. I apologize.” Prowl wiped at his optics, voice thick. “Near the end of carrying- emotions became more volatile. I am. Not used to someone being so kind to me.”

“I know.” Jazz continued to rub his back. “Long as those aren’t unhappy tears, alright?”

“I do not know why I am crying.” Prowl complained. “Last time, I merely became angry easier. My co-workers used to needle me to see if they could get me to flip my desk.”

Jazz frowned. “I don’t think I like the sound of your coworkers.” Imagine teasing a heavily gravid mech just to try and get him to react.

“I normally. . . keep my emotions under control.” Prowl cycled his vents, leaning against Jazz’s shoulder. “I imagine they found it amusing to see me. . . ‘lose my cool’, so to speak.”

“Well, that’s because they were slagers.” Jazz took the spoon and empty energon swirl container and set them on the berthside table, then tugged the covers back up over Prowl. “Ready for some more recharge?”

Prowl turned onto his side and slowly wiggled back down until he was comfortable. Once he lay his helm back on the pillow, he was almost immediately back into recharge.

Now that Jazz was awake, he wouldn’t be able to get back into recharge, but that was alright. He held Prowl close and allowed himself to enjoy the soft hum of the Praxians’ systems and the whirr of his vents His EM field was loose and relaxed in recharge, and the fainter whisp of Strongarm’s field could be teeked as well. Jazz let out his own field to overlap comfortably, and let himself just relax. He was so grateful, and so lucky, that Primus had seen fit to bring Bluestreak and Prowl into his life. And soon, Strongarm.

Bluestreak woke bright and early, so Jazz went to fetch him and start breakfast. Prowl stirred not too long afterwards, about the time that fuel was ready. Though he still needed large amounts of recharge, it was getting harder to get all that in one chunk. All too often low fuel warnings, Strongarm kicking, or just general aches and pains had him up.

“Morning, Prowl.” Jazz greeted, “Ready for some muffins and a

scramble?”

“Very.” Prowl went over to Bluestreak’s playpen and bent over, but didn’t make it very far before he grimaced and slowly straightened back up.

“You alright?” Jazz inquired, giving the contents of the pan a quick flip.

“My back.” Prowl said by way of explanation. He put a hand against his lower spinal strut and leaned back slightly, obviously trying to work out whatever crick was bothering him.

“Here, this is ready to be taken off the stove. Want to serve it up?” Jazz turned off the cooker, then swapped places with Prowl. As the Praxian portioned out three servings of breakfast, Jazz scooped Bluestreak out of his playpen and carried him over to his high-chair at the kitchen island.

Prowl placed a plate in front of Jazz, and a colorful, Captain-Action themed one on Bluestreak’s tray, before sitting down with his own heaping serving. Jazz heard his hydraulics and struts creak as he settled onto the stool with a sigh.

“How are you doing, really?” Jazz inquired, mashing up a bit of Bluestreak’s fuel with a fork before carefully maneuvering it into the sparkling’s mouth.

“I am just sore.” Prowl reassured him with a soft sigh. “It is normal enough, this far along. If it weren’t for my leg, I’d be fine.”

“Would you be up for another spa trip?” Jazz suggested. “A little date before the newspark comes?”

“Ah-“ Prowl hesitated, glancing at Bluestreak, who was happily ripping his muffin apart. “Bluestreak-“

Since the kidnapping, Bluestreak had grown even more intolerant of being apart from his creators. They would have to get him used to sparklingsitters again, but it was clear that Prowl wasn’t ready for that either.

“He can come with us.” Jazz suggested. “There’s a sparkling play area, he can tire himself out, then nap while I take care of you.”

It was clear that Prowl couldn’t argue with that. “Well, alright. I could

use another massage.” He suggested shyly.

“You got it.”

Jazz made a reservation for them the next evening. When the time arrived, they bundled up Bluestreak and headed down to the street to catch a transport. Bluestreak, understandably, did not want to ride in his stroller, and so Jazz carried him. It seemed he wasn’t happy with this arrangement, though, since he kept reaching over Jazz’s shoulder for Prowl and calling for his Ri Ri.

“I’m sorry, Bluestreak.” Prowl said sadly, rubbing the sparkling’s helm. “I cannot carry you. You’ve gotten too heavy.”

Between his leg and the stage of his carriage, Prowl had been banned from any and all heavy lifting. And Bluestreak, who was getting quite hefty, certainly counted.

Fortunately, it wasn’t long before a transport arrived and the family boarded to find seats at the front. Bluestreak immediately squirmed out of Jazz’s arms, obviously wanting to sit in his carrier’s lap. Unfortunately for him, Prowl didn’t have much of a lap left. It ended with a pouting sparkling draped over his carrier’s belly, clinging to his chestplate and babbling his complaints about how his sister was taking up all the space.

“I know, I know.” Prowl said patiently, running a hand up and down Bluestreak’s back between his little wings. “You will have my lap back soon enough.”

When they entered the Iacon Central Bathhouse, Bluestreak grew quiet. He had never been in such an enormous, ostentatiously decorated building before, and it was clear he didn’t know what to make of it.

In the play area, there were a few sparklings of various ages running around through the jets of liquid that shot up from the floor or utilizing the built-in squirt guns to attack their companions. Bluestreak stared, obviously unsure of what to do.

“It’s alright, Bluestreak.” Prowl slowly eased himself down onto a bench at the edge of the play area. “Go play.”

The sparkling didn’t want to go by himself, but gained more confidence when Jazz agreed to hold his hand. Together, they stepped underneath that enormous bucket, which slowly filled with solvent until it tipped, dumping its contents all over the pair. Bluestreak

shrieked, but not unhappily. They next went to a small, globe-shaped fountain that shot out jets in tune to upbeat pop music, which had Bluestreak running from jet to jet trying to predict which one would activate next. By the time he found the slide, he was smiling and laughing happily, letting go of his sire's hand to run around and find the next adventure.

"I'm glad you suggested this." Prowl said softly as Jazz returned to his side. Together, the pair watched their sparkling join another of his age group underneath the bucket, jumping up and down and cheering as they awaited their drenching. "He hasn't looked this happy since the kidnapping."

"He needed to have some fun." Jazz placed a hand on Prowl's shoulder, watching Bluestreak with a big grin. "Our reservation isn't for another joor, so he's got plenty of time to play."

The timing proved to be ideal, because right about when the joor was up, Bluestreak came toddling over to his creators. He was yawning widely and rubbing his optics, obviously ready for a nap.

"Alright, bitlet." Jazz swung the sparkling up into his arms, then over his shoulder. Bluestreak activated his magnets, attaching himself firmly to Jazz's backplate, and was out like a light.

Leaving the noisy play area, Jazz checked them into their private room and led Prowl into the quiet, calm space. Soft music played over hidden speakers, and a small oil fountain in the corner added the sound of trickling liquid, creating a peaceful effect. Prowl slipped down into the oil with a sigh, sinking up to his chin in the warm, buoyant liquid.

Jazz gave Bluestreak a quick check to make sure that all of the sparkling's frame vents were shut, then joined his partner in the pool. The sparkling barely even stirred, oral vents whispering softly against the back of his sire's neck.

"Alright, let's see if we can't work out some of those aches and pains, hmm?" Jazz took one of Prowl's pedes into his lap. The protoform of his ankles was hot and swollen, making the armor plates flare out. Activating his magnets, Jazz went to work. The soft, happy rumble of Prowl's systems joined the soothing sounds of the private room, and Jazz smiled.

Slowly, he worked his way up Prowl's frame, finding the various points of tension and strain. His fuel and hydraulic lines were swollen

from the increased pressure on his systems, which caused a cascading effect of discomfort across his body. Jazz couldn't fix the issue, not until Prowl gave emergence and his systems returned to their baseline, but he could help realign things. Find more comfortable places for cables to lay, gently rub pockets of fluid out of swollen protoform, and adjust armor pieces so they didn't pinch or bind.

Prowl's hips and pelvic girdle were particularly sore, as Strongarm's heavy weight pressed down on them, so Jazz paid extra attention to the join between pelvic plating and thigh. Prowl hissed and leaned back as Jazz found a particularly sensitive spot, before sighing softly.

"Does that one hurt?" Jazz questioned.

"Some, yes." Prowl admitted, stretching out his leg. "But please, don't stop."

Jazz didn't have any intention to. He rubbed his hands up Prowl's swollen sides, feeling the taut protoform stretched over their newspark. Strongarm must be running out of room in there. As Jazz ran his fingers over a lump in Prowl's side, he was pretty sure he could feel the little femme's helm. Opposite must have been her pedes, pressing hard against the prison containing her.

"Is that uncomfortable?" Jazz ran a finger over the ridge of one tiny pede. It moved, retracting before stretching out again to make another lump slightly lower.

"Immensely." Prowl responded with a wry grin. He rubbed a hand over his belly, pressing in gently as if he was trying to maneuver the newspark into a better position. Strongarm squirmed, making his belly deform into an oblong shape, before settling down again in a more curled position. "But that is alright. I will live."

"Can't wait until I can hold her." Jazz commented, moving his touches further back to press into the knots of Prowl's backstruts.

"I can't wait until you can hold her too." Prowl let out a long, deep groan as Jazz found another spot of tension. "My back will thank you."

Jazz chuckled. "To say nothing of your ankles and hips."

"Indeed." Prowl shifted, wings flaring in a stretch and rotating in their hinges before settling back to neutral. "Thank you, Jazz. For being so kind. And caring."

It was something that Jazz didn't feel he needed to be thanked for, but he still cupped the back of Prowl's helm and leaned in for a kiss.

"Always." Jazz looked straight into Prowl's blue optics, raising his visor to meet his partner's gaze with his own. "You deserve it. And don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise."

"Alright." Prowl agreed softly. And maybe, one day, he'd truly believe it.

Jazz kissed him again, then returned to his task.

Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jazz had steadily been sneaking information from work back home to Prowl, then relaying Prowl's thoughts on Autobot operations back to the generals at the Officer's Meetings. Though he was now getting the Prime's support, the old fogies still didn't much like having to listen to some young, upstart, low-class Polyhexian spy. It was like ramming his head into an ununtrium wall.

Which was a problem, because a big battle was being planned over control of Tesarus. One that could lead to the city remaining under Autobot control, or falling into the hands of the Decepticons. Prowl made his recommendations, and Jazz presented them, and then there was nothing they could do but wait to see what happened.

What happened became obvious a decacycle later, as Prowl and Jazz sat and watched the news. It was devastating. Tesarus had fallen, and thousands of citizens along with her. The Decepticons had taken it, forcing the Autobots into retreat.

Jazz tried to turn the vidscreen off, but Prowl threw out a hand to stop him. His face was set in a stony frown, and his wings were hiked up high. Barely restrained anger rolled off of him in waves.

"Jazz, is there an Officer's Meeting happening right now?" Prowl asked in an icy voice.

"Uh." Jazz checked the Autobot schedule. There was, with Mirage currently sitting in on it in his stead. A quick ping to his subordinate confirmed it. They were debriefing on the Tesauros situation at that moment, and planning out their next moves. "Yes."

"Take me there." Prowl hefted himself off the couch.

"Wait, what?" Jazz stood, staring at his partner. "You can't just go into Autobot headquarters and—"

“Jazz.” Prowl grabbed him by the collar and stared into his visor. “Take me there right now or I will go by myself.” His tone booked no arguments.

Jazz had a sneaking suspicion that there would be no winning this one. He had seen Prowl be stubborn before, but he had never seen the Praxian so deadly serious. “Right. Let me just grab Bluestreak.”

A sleepy Bluestreak was mag’d to Jazz’s chest, then he was leading the way out of the apartment to catch a transport to Autobot headquarters. The entire time, Prowl was silent. Silent, and simmering.

At the Autobot base, Jazz was quickly waved through all of the security checkpoints due to his clearance levels, though the guards shot nervous looks at the furious, gravid Praxian at his side.

“What room are they in?” Prowl questioned as they made their way into the most secure portion of the base.

“You can’t seriously be thinking about crashing an Officer’s meeting.” Jazz protested weakly.

“I am and I will.” Prowl marched through the halls as best he could. Even with his limp and his waddle, he was still threatening enough to send aides skittering out of his way.

Jazz reluctantly led Prowl to briefing room 3, behind which the Generals and other Bigwigs were probably doing their best to explain away the latest crushing defeat. Outside the door, Ironhide stood guard.

“Jazz?” The big mech questioned when he saw them approach. “And Prowl?”

“Let us in, ‘Hide.” Jazz requested.

Ironhide shook his head “Ain’t my orders. You’re on leave, and you’ve got a civilian with you.”

“Ironhide-“ Jazz began.

“Sir.” Prowl cut him off. “I have business with the Prime and the Generals. We are losing this war, and if I am not allowed in, we could be seeing total Decepticon victory within a Vorn. Let. Me. In.”

Ironhide raised an optic ridge, but shrugged and stepped aside. "If you say so, mech."

"Thanks, 'Hide." Jazz quickly pried Bluestreak from his chest and passed him over to the guardmech. "Here, hold Blue for a minute? I might need both hands to hold Prowl back."

And indeed, Prowl was already palming open the door to stalk inside. Jazz hurried after him.

When the door to the briefing room slid open, and all conversation stopped so that the mecha inside could stare at the newcomers. Optimus' optics went wide in shock, while the rest of the Generals seemed furious. The only mech not surprised was Mirage, who nearly leaned back in amusement.

"Commander Jazz?" One of the generals questioned. "What is the meaning of this-?"

"I am here to speak to you." Prowl began, ignoring the shocked exclamations that resulted.

"This is completely improper." One of the other generals blustered. "To have some- some *carrier* come into a war meeting-"

"You are losing this war!" Prowl said sternly, just barely below shouting. "You are handing Cybertron over to the Decepticons on a silver platter."

"How dare you- Who do you think you are?"

"I have been making recommendations for Autobot operations, and time and time again I am ignored." Prowl placed both hands on the table and leaned forward. "The results are obvious. You are having your afts handed to you. Thousands of good mecha are dying on the battlefield every cycle to feed your hubris."

"Prowl-" Now it was Optimus that spoke. "I understand your concerns, but-"

"I don't think you do." There were gasps as Prowl cut the Prime off. "Because if you did you would *listen to me*. I may be carrying, but my processors are unaffected. I can predict exactly what will happen if you continue on the way that you are. I can give you the causality numbers, the property damage, the economic downfall, all of the things that will happen to Cybertron if Megatron was allowed win. He

bombed my city-state off the face of the planet and exterminated my people, and he will continue to do so to every group that he considers undesirable until there is nothing and no one left on the planet to oppose him.”

“Prowl-“

“Then-“ Prowl raised his voice further. “Once he is tyrant of the planet, his ambitions will spread across the stars, to subjugate, enslave, and punish other races, because Megatron and his officers will never be satisfied. You have one chance to stop them, and that is here. On Cybertron.”

“And you think that you, an Enforcer, are equipped to stop him?” One of the generals sneered.

“I was special ordered by the Enforcers, designed for large-scale predictive tactics and operations.” Prowl did not brag, he simply stated fact.

“An Enforcer operation is quite different from an army on a battlefield. It is ridiculous to think that we should have to listen to some Cold-constructed jumped up mech who can’t even keep his legs shut-“

“Then lose! Lose the war, and let all the deaths and slaughter that results be on your helm!” Now Prowl was yelling. “Or you could listen to me and have a fight chance-“

“Prowl.” Jazz interrupted, placing a hand on his partner’s shoulder.

“What-?!” Prowl whipped around with a snarl, wings high and angry.

“I think maybe we should get you to the medbay.” Jazz said gently.

“I do not need-“ Prowl cut himself off, obviously now becoming aware of the fluid running down his thighs to puddle on the floor.

“Prowl of Praxus.” Optimus stood, his deep tone commanding respect from all in the room. “I think it is high time we had a conversation. A serious one, about what role you can have in the Autobots. I would love to listen to you, and your ideas, as soon as you feel sufficiently recovered from emergence to speak to me. But yes, for now-“ He smiled gently. “I think it best we pause this conversation for a few cycles so that you can attend to other things.”

“Uh, yes.” The righteous anger that had fueled Prowl up until that point seemed to have evaporated as his frame began to convert to emergence mode.

Jazz was already on the comm to Ratchet, who was fortunately in the building and, even more fortunately, had just finished work on some of the most seriously injured from the recent battle. He was on his way to the briefing room with a stretcher.

“Alright, Prowl.” Jazz took his partner’s arm and gently steered him towards the door. “Ratch’ is here. You can keep yelling at folks tomorrow, alright?”

Prowl groaned, stumbling to lean against Jazz as his plating rippled with a contraction.

“Hey, OP?” Jazz glanced back towards his leader. “Could you look after Blue for a bit? I left him outside with Ironhide.”

“Of course, Jazz. I would be happy to.” Optimus looked at the other mecha in the room. “Gentlemechs, we will continue this another cycle. You are all dismissed.”

Disgruntled generals filed out of the room, carefully avoiding the puddle on the floor. Mirage offered Jazz a grin and an optic roll as he followed them out.

Ratchet arrived soon after, a hoverstretcher at his side. Bluestreak had been transferred to Optimus’ arms, and he watched with concern as his carrier was placed upon it.

“It’s alright, Blue.” Jazz came over to kiss the sparkling on the helm. “Ri Ri is going to be just fine. Your sister is coming, and as soon as she’s here, we’ll call you in to meet her. Alright? Until then, have fun with Oppy.”

Bluestreak settled unhappily against Optimus’s chest and waved goodbye to his creators as they and the medic rushed off to the medbay.

Prowl was silent, aside from soft groans and pants, for the trip, and soon enough had been transferred to a mediberth in a private room in the medical bay.

“You’re just fine, Prowl.” Ratchet patted his knee as he started getting together the equipment he’d need.

“She isn’t too early?” Prowl asked in concern, squeezing Jazz’s hand.

“Only by two decacycles. She’s plenty developed.” Ratchet reassured him, attaching a spark monitor to Prowl’s chest and another to his belly.

Prowl sighed and bowed his helm. “I made a fool of myself.”

“Are you kidding?” Jazz chuckled. “I’ve never seen the Generals so scared in all my functioning. That was brilliant.”

“I yelled at them, and then went into emergence in front of them.” Prowl complained, cheeks red.

“And they’re never gonna forget it, trust me.” Jazz kissed the crest on his helm. “Don’t worry about that for now. Just think about Strongarm.”

“You’re already dialated quite a bit.” Ratchet commented from his place between Prowl’s legs. “Second emergences tend to go quicker than the first. Was Bluestreak’s fairly fast?”

“It seemed like it went on forever, but I think it was actually less than a cycle.” Prowl huffed, a shudder running through his frame. The hand holding Jazz’s clenched down hard, a sign of how much the contractions were affecting him.

“You’ve been in emergence mode for a little bit. I suspect you were just ignoring the signs so you could go shout down the generals.” Ratchet sounded rather amused by it all. “Sit tight, if you keep progressing at this speed, I think you’ll be ready to push within the joor.”

“Thank Primus.” Prowl’s heels dug into the covers of the berth as his entire frame flexed. It looked terribly uncomfortable.

“You’re doing amazing, sweetspark.” Jazz rubbed Prowl’s nearest wing with his free hand, watching with concern as the Praxian’s handsome face scrunched up with pain.

“I know. That it will end soon. But-“ Prowl tossed his head back, pressed it into the pillows of the berth. “Does it have to hurt so slagging much?”

“You’ll have to take that up with Primus.” Ratchet cracked as he set down some warmed towels at the end of the berth alongside some

surgical tools. Jazz grimaced at the sight of scalpels, forceps, and other things he could not name. “Just in case, don’t worry Jazz. I don’t really expect anything to go wrong here.”

Jazz alternated between murmuring soft reassurances to Prowl and checking up on Optimus and Bluestreak via comm. The sparkling was apparently a little upset, but Optimus had taken him to the on-base day care center and was working on enticing him to play with some action figures.

The joor passed slowly, until, finally, Prowl gave a harsh intake and clutched at his belly. “Ah- I. I need to-“

“It’s alright, Prowl.” Ratchet tugged over a stool and placed himself between the Praxian’s spread legs. “You can push now.”

“Thank. Primus-“ Prowl grit out through his denta, before he bore down with everything he had.

Jazz felt utterly useless to do anything but sit there and watch as Prowl labored. The Praxian growled through one contraction, then screamed at the next. A spark-wrenching sound.

But then, it was followed by a thin little cry. Jazz’s helm shot up to see something round and slimey held in Ratchet’s hands.

Prowl was panting harshly now, optics looking around anxiously.

“Ratch. Ratch, put her on Prowl’s chest.” Jazz urged.

Clearly, Ratchet remembered what Prowl had admitted before. That he hadn’t even been allowed to hold Bluestreak after his emergence. The medic quickly plopped little Strongarm down right over Prowl’s spark, laying a towel over the still wet sparkling.

“Oh-“ Prowl said softly, his shaking free hand rising to lay gently over his daughter. Strongarm whined, nuzzling her fat face against her carrier’s plating.

“There she is.” Tears welled up in Jazz’s optics, and he felt no shame in letting them fall. “There’s our little femme.”

“Yes.” Prowl’s voice was a little choked up as he curled in to hold her close. “She’s finally here.”

“She’s perfect.” Jazz leaned in to get a better look. Strongarm had a

stubby little crest on her helm, which would one day mature into a proper Praxian chevron, and tiny wings flicked on her back. She was still protoform grey underneath the slime of emergence, but Jazz had no doubt her colors would come in beautifully.

“I’m going to give her a quick scan.” Ratchet warned, leaning in with a small handheld scanner. “You can keep holding her.”

Jazz strongly suspected that there wasn’t a force in the universe that could’ve gotten Prowl to let go of his daughter at that point. Fortunately, he didn’t need to, because Ratchet declared her in perfect health a klik later.

A little while later, Strongarm had gotten cleaned up and was taking her first meal at her carrier’s breast. Prowl’s tears had dried, and he had optics only for his daughter as he watched her fuel.

“Prowl, I’m gonna comm OP and have him bring Bluestreak in. Do you mind if he comes in and sees you too?” Jazz asked.

“Oh.” Prowl finally pried his gaze from Strongarm to look at his partner. “Yes, that’s fine. I don’t mind.”

Optimus Prime entered the private room shortly later, a squirming Bluestreak in his arms.

“Jasz! Ri ri!” He cried as soon as soon as he spotted his creators.

Jazz quickly took Bluestreak from Optimus and sat back down at Prowl’s side. Bluestreak wiggled his way out of Jazz’s grasp, but managed to be restrained before he could clamber all over his sore carrier. Then, the sparkling spotted what was in Prowl’s arms and stopped with a gasp.

“Yes, Bluestreak. This is your sister.” Strongarm finished fueling, so Prowl tilted her slightly so that Bluestreak could see her better.

The sparkling let out a fascinated “Ooo!” and reached forward to pat his sister’s face.

“Gently, Blue. Gentle.” Jazz took his son’s hand so that he wouldn’t slap his newborn sister. “She’s real fragile right now, but I promise you’ll be able to play with her real soon.”

Bluestreak settled in to just stare at her instead, watching as Strongarm yawned widely before settling in to recharge against his carrier's spark.

Finally, Prowl seemed to remember that they had a guest in the room and looked up to see Optimus standing a respectful distance away. "Prime, sir."

"It's okay, Prowl." Optimus held up a hand. "I'm glad to see that all went well. I will speak to you in a few cycles, as soon as you're feeling better. I promise."

"Yes, Prime." Prowl settled back with a sigh, and soon had followed his daughter into recharge.

The next cycle, Prowl and Strongarm were discharged to head home. Prowl was installed on the couch in a blanket pile, Strongarm still cradled to his chest. Now, though, he was using the sling they had bought earlier so that he could use his arms while keeping Strongarm secure. Her magnets would active in another few decacycles, giving her the ability to cling, but until then, the sling would keep her safe.

As promised, Optimus Prime came by a few cycles later to speak with Prowl. Eventually, the big mech agreed to take Prowl on as an official consultant to the Autobots, giving him the authority to stand level with the generals while still allowing him to do much of his work from home so that he could take care of his creations.

And, as soon as Strongarm was a little older, Prowl would be offered a full staff position. With his own office and everything. For now, Prowl could rest and tackle the information brought to him by Prime when he wasn't busy with Strongarm.

"Thank you, Prime." Prowl bowed his helm, stroking a gentle hand over Strongarm, who was beginning to stir. "I will see to this datapad as soon as I have fueled her."

"Take your time." Prime stood. "I look forward to seeing what you have to say."

Chapter End Notes

Nothing left but the epilogue now!

Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

~ A vorn later ~

“As Team 2 circles around to the left flank, Team 3 will be infiltrating the primary base,” Prowl traced his fingers through the holo display being projected from the center of the table, tiny groups of soldiers portrayed in hard light performing their indicated tasks.

Around the war table, the various generals took notes on the operation that they would soon be carrying out. After two quartexes of these types of briefings, they had managed to finally stop staring at their Tactical Officer and his creation as he spoke.

Prowl paused briefly and readjusted Strongarm. She let go of his nozzle with a whine as she was shifted into his other arm, before finding her carrier’s other nozzle and happily continuing her meal.

Jazz, there representing the Special Ops department, hid a smile and continued taking notes on what his agents would be doing during the operation. Since Prowl had taken over the Tactical Department, they had actually started taking back territory. Briefings were more business than bragging and arguing. The intelligence his agents fought for, sometimes died for, was actually being utilized and turned into a weapon against the Decepticons.

Prowl wrapped up the briefing just at the same time that Strongarm finished fueling. Jazz didn’t believe for a moment that was coincidence, Prowl knew exactly how long it took their daughter to become full.

“Now if you’ll excuse me, sirs, my creation needs to be put down for a nap.” Prowl nodded sharply to the assembled generals and commanders, shifting Strongarm once again so that he could close his chest plating. “If you have any questions, you may direct them to my assistant, Smokescreen. I will be in my office, but it will be closed for the next two joors so that Strongarm may recharge. By your leave, sir.” This last bit was directed at Optimus Prime.

“Of course, Prowl.” Prime nodded at him and smiled. “Thank you.”

Prowl saluted, then turned and strode out at a brisk clip.

Smokescreen stood and took Prowl's place at the head of the room. Jazz sighed and settled back in his chair, resigning himself to another half joor of inane questions.

Once the meeting was over, Jazz had to call together his own department for a second briefing, this one specific to the role his chosen agents would play in the upcoming operation. Then, finally, he could make his way to Prowl's office.

The door was locked, of course, but Jazz had the special override code. The door obligingly slid open, and Jazz quickly slipped inside before locking it again behind him.

Prowl glanced up sharply from his work, but relaxed when he saw that it was only Jazz. "Ah, hello, Jazz." He said softly.

"Hey, Prowler." Jazz slipped up alongside his partner, pressing himself between Prowl's wings and reaching down to pet Strongarm, who was curled up in her carrier's lap. "How you two doing?"

"We are well." Prowl smiled softly, running a hand over Strongarm's helm before returning his hands to his keyboard to enter a few last bits of data. He was just making final tweaks to the operation they would be carrying out, quadruple-checking his already perfect work.

Jazz pulled over his own chair and produced a portable terminal from his subspace, setting it down on the desk so that he could do his own work. Sure, he had his own office, but where was the fun in sitting in it by himself? He mostly used it for meetings with agents. It was much nicer to sit next to Prowl and Strongarm and work, even if they did not speak.

Finally, Jazz's internal alarm went off and he saved it work, closing his portable terminal with a click. Looking over, he saw that Prowl was also wrapping up his work and powering down his terminal.

"Come on, lover, let's head home." Jazz stood and stretched, looking forward to getting out of headquarters for the cycle.

"Yes, let's." Prowl very carefully picked up Strongarm, who let out a sleepy beep, and held her to his chest until she latched on and settled back down into recharge.

Before they could head out, though, they had to stop by the on-base daycare to pick up their other creation.

Bluestreak was deep in a crowd of his friends, talking and laughing as they worked to stack a tower of blocks taller than any of them. When he spotted his creators at the door, though, he abandoned the game and ran over.

“Ri ri, Sire!” He called happily, slamming into Jazz’s legs and smiling up at his creators. “Time to go home?”

“Yeah, bitty. Time to head home.” Jazz rubbed his helm fondly, then managed to get the youngling to let of his legs so he could take Bluestreak’s hand instead. “So what’d you get up to today?”

“Kup visited! He told us a story!” Bluestreak said excitedly. The old military mech often dropped by the daycare to spin tales, and Bluestreak looked forward to it every time. “He says, he once went to this planet. And there were aliens! And they were or-orga-organic.”

“Yeah?” Jazz prompted, happy to listen to the garbled tale. Reaching the street, he transformed and opened his door so that Bluestreak could clamber in. Next to him, Prowl transformed as well, wrapping around the still snoozing Strongarm, so that they could drive back to their hab.

Bluestreak had wrapped up his tale by the time they got home (at least, Jazz thought he had. It was sometimes hard to tell), and threw himself down in front of the vidscreen to watch his favorite after-shift show.

Strongarm was awake now as well, so Prowl set her down on the floor with a toy selection and set about seeing what their daughter would be interested in playing with today. Seeing that everyone was occupied, Jazz went into the kitchen to start dinner.

Fuel was accomplished with a minimum of mess. Strongarm didn’t like to play with her food the way that Bluestreak had, and was much better at finishing a meal without coating herself in it.

However, she did like baths, so messy or not, once dinner was done she slapped her palms on the tray of her high-chair and demanded, “Baf!”

“Yes, your highness.” Jazz laughed and unbuckled her from the chair to take her to the washrack.

“Do I have to?” Bluestreak turned pleading optics on his carrier.

“Yes.” Prowl responded, nudging his son towards the washracks as well. “Come now, you don’t want to turn up to daycare tomorrow dirty.”

“Awww.” Bluestreak pouted, but made it to the washrack as well with a minimum of fuss.

Joors later, baths had been had, games played, vidshows watched, and finally, both Bluestreak and Strongarm had been put to berth.

Prowl settled onto the couch with a sigh and leaned against Jazz. “They’re in recharge.”

“Which means now we can play a bit.” Jazz tugged Prowl into his lap, snuggling him tightly. “You up for it?”

“Yes.” Prowl no longer needed excessive amounts of recharge, which meant he could stay up later with Jazz. “In fact, I had a request.”

“Oh?” To Jazz’s delight, their interface life had not ended with Strongarm’s emergence, though Prowl still laid back and let Jazz do whatever he wanted more often than not. Jazz was very interested to see what Prowl wanted.

“Would it be alright if I-“ Prowl hesitated, obviously nervous. Jazz rubbed his arm encouragingly, waiting for him to gather his thoughts. “I have never used my spike before. I would like to try. Would that be alright?”

“I think that sounds like a great idea.” Jazz wasn’t picky, and enjoyed giving and receiving in equal measure. “Should we relocate?”

The two moved to their berthroom. Jazz laid back on the berth, spreading his legs and opening the cover over his valve. Prowl stood over him, shifting in place awkwardly.

“I- I’m not sure what I am doing.” Prowl admitted. “I have read some references, but-“

“S’alright Prowl. We can figure it out together.” Jazz said encouragingly. “I promise I will say something if you do anything I don’t like.”

“Okay.” Prowl let his spike extend, gasping a little at the obviously unfamiliar sensation.

Climbing up onto the berth, Prowl placed a hand over his partner’s exposed valve and rubbed at it gently, teasing Jazz’s anterior node and testing the wetness of his internals. He had picked up some interfacing tricks over time, as evidenced by the way he let his glossa trace over Jazz’s chest and across his headlights. Jazz moaned encouragingly, hands finding familiar places on Prowl’s wings as he caressed the glossy surface.

Prowl then found Jazz’s audial horns, sucking on them gently, and Jazz cried out. His legs kicked against the blankets on the berth, and lubricant spurted out around Prowl’s fingers.

“Are you ready?” Prowl questioned, pumping a few fingers in and out of Jazz’s valve.

“Yes, yes, yes, yes.” Jazz panted. “So ready. So ready for you, Prowler.”

“Well then, I won’t make you wait.” Prowl lined himself up and slowly pressed in, wings shaking and optics squeezing shut from the overwhelming, unfamiliar sensation.

Jazz held onto Prowl’s wing mounts for security as his partner began to thrust, rocking them both against the berth. Yes, it was different from when he had spiked Prowl, but no less powerful or pleasurable. He watched how Prowl’s face flushed, optics shut and mouth open to pant, and was once again struck speechless by just how beautiful his Praxian was.

Prowl began to shake, tremors running up his frame, and his pace sped up. “Jazz. Jazz, I think I’m going to-“

“Go ahead.” Jazz rocked his own hips into the thrusts. “Give me everything, Prowler. Everything you got!”

Prowl *growled* as he overloaded, a deep, guttural sound that vibrated down through Jazz’s struts as he emptied himself into his partner. He gave another few weak thrusts as the last spurts of transfluid erupted from his spike, before his arms gave out and he collapsed down onto Jazz.

Jazz chuckled. “Takes a lot out of you, huh, lover?” He questioned, wrapping his arms around his tired partner.

“Mmm.” Prowl agreed, looking up at Jazz with hazy, blue optics.

Suddenly, Jazz felt an incredible wave of desperate love come over him, too strong to keep inside. “Prowl. I love you.”

“Oh.” Prowl said softly, looking at him with a softly confused expression. Then, a slight smile quirked his lips. “I love you too, Jazz.”

Jazz beamed. Because yes, they had shared so much, but actually exchanging those words. It was confirmation that everything he felt, Prowl did too.

“Prowl. Would you bond with me?” Jazz asked, unable to stop himself.

“Bond?” Prowl tilted his head, obviously considering the question. “You- wish to bond with me?”

“Of course I do.” Jazz reached up to cradle his face. “Prowl, you’re so special, so important to me. I would love nothing more than to bond with you.”

“I am cold-constructed-“ Prowl said quietly. “You do not want to be tied to an artificial spark-“

“I don’t care where your spark came from.” Jazz never believed that cold-constructed sparks were any lesser than forged ones. “It’s as real as anybody elses. You’ve made two amazing sparklings, you’ve made me happier than I’ve ever been. I’d be blessed to tie mine to you.”

“Oh-“ Prowl looked away, cheeks flushing further. But, then, the armor over his chest parted to reveal a pulsing, white-blue spark.

Jazz opened his own chest plating, and felt his spark reach out for that of his lover atop him. Their corona’s brushed, drawing a gasp from both mecha. Surface emotions and thoughts drifted between them. Prowl was nervous, yes. But Jazz could also feel how much he *wanted* this. So desperately, even if he didn’t want to admit it to himself.

Then the merge deepened, sparks growing closer until they overlapped, and the line between Jazz and Prowl was erased. They were one. A single spark in two frames. Jazz could feel the phantom sensation of wings on his back, the hum of a powerful tactical processor in the back of his mind, the tug of the two bonds to Bluestreak and Strongarm. Jazz gently felt along the two bonds, but pulled back before he could disturb the two slumbering sparklings.

Jazz, Prowl's mental voice drifted through his processor. Feelings of awe and love came along with it. Jazz, you really love me.

Of course I do, Jazz insisted. With everything I have, now and forever.

I love you. With everything I have. Now and forever.

Chapter End Notes

Th-th-that's all folks! Stay tuned for the next story, whatever it may be! Thanks for coming along on this journey with me.

End Notes

As always, I can also be found at exdraghunt.tumblr.com

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!